

**POLITICS OF SCRIPT: THE CASE OF KONKANI (1961 – 1992)**

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**BY**



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**DEDICATED**  
**TO**  
**MY PARENTS**  
**SHRI. BHASKAR DATTARAM DESAI**  
**AND**  
**SOU. NIRMALA BHASKAR DESAI**

## DECLARATION

I, Narayan Bhaskar Desai, hereby declare that this thesis entitled 'POLITICS OF SCRIPT: THE CASE OF KONKANI (1961-1992)' is the outcome of my own study undertaken under the guidance of Dr. Peter Ronald deSouza, Professor and Head, Department of Political Science, Goa University. It has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or certificate of this or any other University. I have already acknowledged all the sources used by me in the preparation of this thesis.



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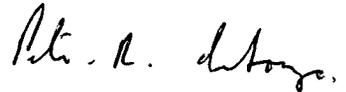
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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **POLITICS OF SCRIPT: THE CASE OF KONKANI (1961 – 1992)** submitted by Mr. Narayan B. Desai, for the award of degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science, is the record of the original work done by him under my supervision. The result of the research presented in this thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award of any other degree or diploma or certificate of this or any other University.

TALEIGAO – GOA  
30 December 2002



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## CHAPTER I : SOCIO-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF KONKANI

### GOA – CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Goa, as a tiny territorial unit in the Indian Union, has a special political as well as cultural significance. The territory carries the history of being a part of the colonial possessions of a European power for a duration almost twice longer than the rest of India. It was the first to go under Western colonial control (1510) and the last to emerge from it (1961), among all the regions of India<sup>1</sup>. In terms of the cultural contact and encounter with Europe in the early phase of the modern era, Goa should be regarded as the first territory in India to experience an intense and sustained interaction with Western culture, one that was enforced by the political power of a European state in connivance with the Catholic church. As a result of this encounter this land has been described as the 'Rome of the East', as perceived by the West on the one hand, or as '*Konkan Kashi*' i.e. 'the holy land (the popular name among religious minded Hindus for the city of Varanasi or Benares) of Konkan' as described by the local Hindu protagonists on the other (Apte, 1999). Goa is also portrayed as a place of communal harmony and peaceful living, where people of the two major religious groups viz. Hindus and Catholics,

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<sup>1</sup> . Generally, this period of colonial rule over Goa is said to be of 451 years starting from Nov. 1510 to December 1961. However, the areas which experienced the Portuguese rule for this entire period were only those covered by the district called Tiswadi (thirty villages) later named as Ilhas, which gained significance due to the capital city of Goa (now known as Old Goa) followed by Panaji, the present capital. The two other districts Bardes or Bardez (twelve localities) and Sasashti or Salsette (region of sixty-six villages) came under the sway of the Portuguese in 1543. These three together (four in the present arrangement as Salsette was later split into two by creating Murgao or Mormugao in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century) are called the 'Old Conquests' or 'Velhas Conquistas' and have been transformed totally through religious conversions, destruction of temples in hundreds and infamous inquisition in the early centuries of the alien rule. The remaining seven talukas of Goa to go under the Portuguese control in 1763 (Ponda, Sanguem and Quepem or Kepe), 1764 (Canacona or Kankon ), 1781 (Bicholim or Dicholi and Satari or Sattari) and 1788 (Pernem or Pedne) make the 'New Conquests' or 'Novas Conquistas'.

often share the customs, traditions, rituals and deities while developing a culture of mutual co-existence (Lusotopie, 2000: 333-345; Newman, 2001: 110-125). This interculturality, evident in the day-to-day life of Goans, has recently received the attention of scholars in the field of anthropology and sociology<sup>2</sup>. Goa therefore is a place where the burden of its history weighs heavily on its contemporary politics, on its definition of itself today.

### **Goa: Geography And Topography**

While we think of Goa today as a territory admeasuring 3702 sq. km. (bounded on the north by the state of Maharashtra and on the south by the state of Karnataka, with the natural boundaries of the Western Ghats and the Arabian sea on the east and west respectively), the boundaries have kept changing with its history. In the pre-colonial past Goa represented the capital city (Govapuri) which later became the initial territorial holding of the Portuguese colonial power. It was a famous port town and a trading centre visited by traders from overseas as well as from the neighbouring regions (Fernandes, 1989: 61-62). In relation to what is known as Goa today the capital city of Goa was a much smaller territory. Again, this capital with the same name was located at two different places in two different periods of history. The earlier one was the capital of the Kadamba kings, on the banks of the river Zuari, referred to as Goa Velha till the current times, while the latter was the present Old Goa (*Velha Goa* in Portuguese) which had

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<sup>2</sup>. Dr. Alexander Henn of Heidelberg University has referred to it in his paper 'Becoming of Goa' presented at the Lusotopie Conference 2000 held in Goa.

Brahmapuri as a centre of pilgrimage for Hindus. It was later made into a centre of pilgrimage for the Roman Catholics which it continues to be even today.

The city of Goa that had the honour of being the capital city under different political powers changed from the earliest *Goa Velha* of the Kadamba Kings to *Velha Goa* of the Adilshah (occupied by the Portuguese) and lastly to *Nova Goa* (currently known as Panaji) midway through the Portuguese rule. The history of Goa has much to do with this changing description of Goa or *Goem*, from *Goa Velha* or *Vhoddlem Goem* (Greater Goa) through *Velha Goa* i.e. *Pornem Goem* (Old Goa) to *Nova Goa* or *Novem Goem* (New Goa). In this sense Goa represents an idea, an image, a concept that has many parts: hierarchy, history and territory. This idea or image of Goa has the glory and glitter of the past attached to it which has led to its often being aptly described as ‘Golden Goa’ or ‘*Amchem Bhangrachim Goem*’ in popular expression.

The geographical extent of Goa under the Kadambas and the rulers before them covered the areas now coming under the district of Sindhudurg in Maharashtra, areas of Belgaum, Supa, Dandeli, Karwar and Honavar in the present Karnataka (Kamat, 1983: 11). The importance of Gopakapattana in terms of defence and security made this capital city not only a political and diplomatic centre but being a port town also a commercial one. The territories controlled from this capital made a much larger Goa than the one that we know of at present.

The image of Goa over the centuries has undergone a lot of change not only in terms of the geographical extent or area as discussed above but also in relation to its role in the life of local people, change in the nature of relationship it had for those who had to leave the place and also those who chose to stay on.

Those who left the place out of compulsion did not abandon the rights they had in the village community system which operated in a participatory fashion (Gomes Pereira, 1981). They continued to retain their emotional links with their respective villages and received their dues generation after generation. They remained as beneficiaries and shareholders in the village surplus even without being the residents and contributors to the local economy. On the other hand, those who stayed on facing the stringent rules and diverse demands of the new rulers were, in many instances, deprived of their own belongings. For them their physical presence in Goa did not assure a parity of status with many others. The two sections looked at Goa differently on the basis of their experience.

Also what we call Goa today is not the product of common political events evenly shared by the entire territory in the course of its history. There have been the shifts and changes in political control and cultural influences in the history of different parts of the territory now known as Goa. Therefore the idea of Goais not a homogenous one. It has an elite and a subaltern view, a community centred construction and finally an evolutionary character.

### **Goa: Myth And Text**

Both Konkan and Goa have their mythical past closely linked to the larger Indian landscape from Gujarat to Kerala through the legendary Parashurama (Kamat, 1989: 4), the warrior God, the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu in the Hindu tradition. Legend has it that the Lord Parashurama created this piece of land by shooting an arrow into the sea and settled some Brahmin families from the northern territories of India on the reclaimed territory (Wagle, 1970), making

it '*Parashurama Kshetra*' or the 'land of Parashurama'. There are other versions like the immigration of Brahmins from the north due to severe famine in that region (Gunjekar, 1884), or with divine order to some Brahmins to settle in Goa on their return journey from pilgrimage of Rameshwar in the south to their homeland in the north (Gunjekar, 1884: 10). These references to mythical roots claim GSBs as the original settlers in Goa but as is the case with many Puranic accounts, the later additions and interpolations containing subjective elements associated generally with the brahmanical formulations cannot be denied in this case. Such addition of new material is done 'to facilitate and legitimate certain social and economic needs' of particular sections (Rao, 1999).

Goa figures as *Gomanta* in Mahabharata and etymologically denotes the land where the arrow of Lord Parashurama fell. The other name *Gomantak* is interpreted by Shenai Goembab as a territory abounding in cattle, and by some others as the place where the demon Goma (?) met his end (interview- K.N.Rao). We also find names such as *Gomanchal* (in Sahyadri Khanda of Skanda Purana) and *Gomanta durga* with reference to Goa.

What is common in the whole of Konkan and *Aparanta* (the western end) is the story of reclamation of land from the sea by Lord Parashurama, colonisation especially of *Gomanta*, or Goa territory, 'with ten families of Brahmans from Trihotrapura', and that they belonged 'to one of the five sub-divisions of the Gauda-Brahmans'(da Cunha, 1991: 11). These brahmans belonging to ten *gotras* were divided into ninety-six families, each settled in a village, leading to the specific denominations of the two provinces in the territory viz. Tisuary (Tisvadi = thirty villages) and Salsette (*Sasashti* = *shat* + *shashti* = 6+60 = sixty-six

[villages] ) representing North and South Goa respectively, and totalling up to ninety-six or *Shannav* in local language. This word *Shannav* denoting the number is said to represent the origin of the class name *Shenavi* (*Senoy, Sinay, Sanavi, Senvi* according to da Cunha). This resemblance of the territorial configuration with the class denomination is significant in terms of the present study which deals with the territorial or regional vis-à-vis the language identity debates involving the GSBs (*Shenavis*) as the most prominent stakeholders. The recent debates on Goan identity have brought this link of spatial and social appropriation of a language area by a class group to the fore.

Equating *Gomanta* (a part) with *Aparanta* (the whole) for the purpose of deciding the terms of cultural and political participation through language via script element and acquiring the control over the dynamics of recognition and representation in democratic set-up through organisational structure deserve further probing into the motives and methods. A cursory look at Goa's documented history should help.

### **Goa: History till Portuguese Colonialism**

The continuous history of Goa from records can be reconstructed from the sixth century A.D (Naik, 1957: 4)<sup>3</sup>. That the region called Goa had a place of importance from ancient times can be seen from the reference made to it as the capital of Konkan in a copper plate of 1391 A.D.<sup>4</sup>. The other names that occur are

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<sup>3</sup> . Though there are some edicts and copper plate writings available for the period earlier than that, historians have no unanimity on the periods in some cases and not much is known of the period.

<sup>4</sup> . Copper plate of 1391 A.D. is mentioned by Shennai Goembab in his lecture dtd. 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1927 quoting JBBRAS vol.4, pp.107, 115.

Gomanta<sup>5</sup> or Govapuri. Mention of 'Kauba' in a geographer's treatise<sup>6</sup> or a traveller's reference to a place called 'Sandabur'<sup>7</sup> also refer to Goa.

Goa today is a unit state in the Indian federal set up. In the past it formed a part of Konkan, geographically and culturally. Konkan as a geographical entity finds mention as early as the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D (Chavan, 1995: 3)<sup>8</sup>. The earlier name for this territory was *Aparanta* which finds mention in *Raghuvansha* of the poet Kalidasa. The name Konkan must have come after this. It has been described with different boundaries over time. We hear of the *Sapta Konkan* or seven Konkans (Chavan, 1995: 8)<sup>9</sup>, Konkan of 900 (Sukhthankar, 1970; Valavalikar, 1928)<sup>10</sup> and 1400 villages (Valavalikar, 1928: 2)<sup>11</sup>, North and South Konkan, Konkan between the two Gangas<sup>12</sup> (Chavan, 1995: 9), or the land between the two *Gads*<sup>13</sup> (Nairne, 1988) etc. The divisions of '*Parashurama Kshetra*' are named as *Gomanta* and *Aparanta* in the old texts, supposed to be representing the North and South Konkan. The term *Aparanta* is sometimes applied to the whole of the

<sup>5</sup> . *Bhishma Parva* ch. 9 of Mahabharata gives a list of Janapadas in India, including Gomanta.

<sup>6</sup> . Ptolomayus or Ptolemy, the Greek geographer in his treatise written during AD 2<sup>nd</sup> century speaks of some towns on the west coast of India under this name, which, say some writers, should have undergone phonetic transformation subsequently . See Angle, Prabhakar, 1994. p.6. Goa: Concepts and Misconcepts.

<sup>7</sup> . 'Selections from the travels of Ibn Batuta 1325-1354', London. 1983, Routledge & Kegan Paul. p.231. See introduction – Minorities on India's West Coast

<sup>8</sup> . Chavan mentions about the Chalukyas overrunning Konkan in the latter half of the sixth century.

<sup>9</sup> . These seven coastal regions stretch from Somnath in Kathiawar in the north to Kanyakumari in the south. They include Saurashtra, Barbara, Konkana, Karhata, Kamata, Tulunga and Kerala, according to Sahyadri khanda of Skanda Purana. 'Prapancha Hridaya' mentions Mushika (South Travancore ), Kerala (North Travancore, Cochin and South Malabar ) including southern half of Kurumbanad taluka , Kupaka ( North Malabar ), Aluva ( South Kanara ) also called Aluva Kheda, Pashu ( perhaps North Kanara or Haiga ), Konkana ( Goa and Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra ) and Para Konkan ( the rest of northern territory extending , perhaps upto the river Vaitarani ). The two speak of different names but more or less the same geographical area.

<sup>10</sup> . This included the area south of the Kundalika river during the rule of Kadamba king Shivachitta, as noted in the copper plate inscription of 1160 A.D.

<sup>11</sup> . This was based on the copper plate inscriptions of 997 A.D. and 1127 A.D.

<sup>12</sup> . Daman ganga river in the north and Gangavali in the south are considered as the two natural boundaries of Konkan.

western coast (in the sense of ‘the country near the western end’, as *Apara* in Sanskrit denotes west and *Anta* means end), while *sunaparanta* is considered as the second name of *Gomanta* (Valavalikar, 1928: 14). All such descriptions include Gomantak or Goa.

In terms of regional history, Goa experienced the rule of the Mauryas (324 – 127 B.C.), Bhojas and Satavahanas followed by the Konkan Mauryas (till 578 A.D.), Chalukyas of Badami (578 – 757 A.D.), Rashtrakutas and Shilaharas before it was conquered by the Kadambas in the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The territory changed hands quite frequently (almost every decade or two) for the next three centuries before the Halsi Kadambas took over in 1218 A.D. It was during this volatile period that the ‘Gopaka pattana’ or Vhoddlem Goem (Goa Velha) became the capital city of the King Jayakeshi I in 1042 A.D. and existed as an important centre of power before it was destroyed by Malik Kafur in 1313 A.D. (Kamat, 1983). There was no respite from this instability for another fifty years until the advent of the Vijayanagara rule in 1370 that continued for a century before Goa fell into the hands of the Bijapur rulers in 1471 A.D. At the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century Adilshahi was established at Bijapur and Goa came under its sway to be lost to the Portuguese within a decade i.e. in 1510 A. D. though only a part of it (Kamat, 1983: 52-55) The lack of continuity and of stability of political rule suffered by the different regions that make up contemporary Goa, its being included with different parts of Konkan and Ghats area in different periods of

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<sup>13</sup> . Rcv. A.K.Nairne mentions Bird’s reference to Sanskrit writers according to whom Konkan stretched from Devgad to Sadashivgad (that is a distance altogether of only about ninety miles): ‘History of the Konkan, 1988 [1896] p. x (Introduction).

history have had their own influence in shaping the Goan polity, society and culture.

### **Goa: Cultural Aspect**

The cultural shaping of Goa is also very interesting. In terms of religion the changes have been in keeping with the overall Indian scene. The Vedic religion with the Brahminic influence is evident in the inscriptions and epigraphic records available to scholars (Apte, 1999: 12). The spread of Buddhism in Goa is testified by the existence of the Buddhist caves in different parts of Goa. One of the earliest disciples of Buddha was Punna, a Goan according to one account (Valavalikar, 1928: 9), who worked for the spread of Buddhism during the fifth century B.C.. The influence of Jainism was experienced through proximity to important Jain pilgrimage centres in Karnataka and due to Harsi Kadambas (Kamat, 1989: 12) who ruled Goa for some time. In the period following the rule of the Kadamba dynasty Goa was under the Hindu reign which was followed by the Muslim arrival in this small territory. The shuffling and reshuffling in religious life of Goans over the centuries through a number of rulers, preceding the arrival of the Portuguese, had its effects on the cultural image of the land and its people. The most affected of the cultural aspects were religion and language.

In religious life, the introduction of deities and worship patterns varied in a limited measure with the faiths that followed political changes. But generally the folk life and practices continued without much disturbance. The folk deities and rituals of worship had existed for long and with the passage of time they might have absorbed certain influences from the new religions but the larger

framework of the folk religion remained intact. The tribal religion of the Kunnbis, considered aboriginals in Goa, as seen today is a reminder of the distant past largely unaffected by the external influences till very recently (Khedekar, 1993). The deities like *Santeri* and *Betal* still hold their sway over community in villages. In case of the higher castes sanskritic religion and vedic deities possibly formed an important part of their cultural life. The names of deities from the list of Salsette temples destroyed by the Portuguese in the middle of the sixteenth century include varieties of *Betal* and of *Santer*<sup>14</sup>. Different forms of *Ishvar*<sup>15</sup> or *Purush* (*Purush*, *Adya Purush* and *Gram Purush*) and also *Vir* (*Vir* in Varca, Aquem, Cortalim and Majorda; *Chovis Vir* in Chicalim, Vaddem; *Mul Vir* in Margao) along with others like *Bhairav*, *Kshetrapal*, as also different forms of *Nath* (*Siddhanath*, *Naganath*, *Chinchananath*, *Chandranath*, *Ravalnath*, *Ramnath*) were commonly worshipped. All these together made a majority of the temples destroyed, while few others among the rest (such as *Mangesh*, *Shantadurga*, *Mahalakshmi*, *Mahalasa*) belonging to the deities in the Greater tradition, flourished in their new settings in the New Conquest areas<sup>16</sup>. Nothing is found written about their status in their original places, and the reason given is that anything and everything found in these temples and even in the homes of

<sup>14</sup> . *Agyavetal* of Carmona, *Betalbatim* etc.; *Vetal* of Chinchim, Colva, Loutulim etc.; *Betal* of Utorda, Velim, Telaulim etc. are mentioned in the list. *Santer* of Chicolna, Cansaulim, Assolna, Margao, Sernabatim, Varca etc.; *Santeri* of Dabolim, Calata etc; *Shanteri* of Cortalim, Cuncolim etc; *Karyasanter* of Loutulim are some of these.

<sup>15</sup> . *Bhogeshvar* of Arassim, *Baneshvar* and *Sankeshvar* of Benaulim, *Vajaneshtvar* of Cuelim, *Baleshtvar* and *Makuleshtvar* of Colva, *Gautameshtvar* of Gonsua and Orlim, *Laveshtvar* of Verna etc., *Goveshtvar* of Margao, *Dhaveshtvar* of Pali, *Soneshtvar* in Majorda, *Rayeshvar* in Raia, *Goreshtvar* in Vanelim and *Ishvar* in many villages are mentioned in the list of temples destroyed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>16</sup> . The Portuguese policy of mass destruction of native people's places of worship in their early possessions in Goa has been described by some historians. Some of these deities rendered homeless in Salsette were shifted overnight across the Zuari river into the territory outside the Portuguese possessions to be relocated in the villages nearby.

people was consumed by flames (Bhembre,1987). Looking into the past of these later Hindu deities of the Great Tradition we are confronted with the question of their origin and their positioning in the pan-Indian religion. The relationship of *Mangesh* (in Ponda taluka) and *Mallikarjun* (in Canacona) or of the goddess *Mahalsa* (Mardol, Ponda) with the known deities such as *Mangirish* of the East (Assam) and *Mallikarjun* of the South (Andhra Pradesh) (Dhume, 1973) or *Mahalasa* of Maharashtra (Khedekar, 1983: 15) respectively is a matter worth further scrutiny. There are questions posed regarding the likelihood of the original status of these relocated deities (in their present locations) being the local folk deities of the aboriginals later abrogated and associated with the ones in the Greater Tradition (Dhume,1973: 17)<sup>17</sup>. This association and appropriation have, perhaps, resulted in the representation of the cultural reality to suit the understanding of the Hindu mind appreciative of the sanskritic culture and vedic religion. This understanding, in its turn, has made an impact on the language and communication within the religious realm in the form of prayers, addresses, expressions, methods of approach and appreciation.

Folk deities were worshipped in vernacular and the means of worship differed from those for the classical Hindu deities. The vedic deities of Greater Tradition were worshipped in Sanskrit and the prayers, addresses were in the priests' language, not in regular use among the devotees at large. All these factors in religious and cultural sphere are the carriers of language: and language as a symbol of identity and tool of power, is the central concern of this study.

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<sup>17</sup>. God *Mangesh*, for example, is said to have been found by a cow-herd in the service of a landlord.

### Language Scenario

The language situation in Goa and Konkan in the earlier part of the last millenium should have remained volatile due to a number of political and religious upheavals. Konkan and Goa experienced the political rule of Vijayanagara empire during the major part of the fifteenth century (Kamat, 1983). Prior to the inception of this rule in 1366 A.D. the era of political instability accompanied by cultural and religious volatility had continued in the region for almost two centuries. The religious literature produced by the early Marathi saint poets of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century was accessible to a very small section of upper caste Goan Hindus, while the Goan masses had the folk religion available to them, which did not have such a literature. Their religious world was built around the *Mandd* (the central place in a locality for all the social, religious rituals), and bounded by the *Shims* (boundaries of the village world) where the *Shimevoilo* (the one on the boundary = protecting spirit) had to be the protector and caretaker. The concepts of *Puris* (*kula-purusha*) – the founder of the clan, *Gram dev* (village deity), *Kull dev* (deity of the clan) are known to people of all the sections of the Hindu society in Goa and hold prominence in their religious and social life. *Santeri* as the village deity in a large number of villages, and *Betal* as the protector God, form an integral part of the cultural life of a Goan village as is the case in a large part of the Konkan. Language of worship of these village deities of the folks was not textual or standard in the modern sense and had little to do with Bhakti tradition practices and the Bhagavata Dharma popularised from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The traditional rituals of *Disht*, *Bhar* or *Avsar*, *Prasad* (Khedekar, 1993) continue to be practised in day-to-day life of Goans till today.

The language has both spatial and ritual contexts. These are valued by the masses as the genuine and reliable religious tools. None of these have significant role for textual language of mainstream vedic religion like Sanskrit or the popular Bhakti tradition language called Marathi. In Goa most of the temples created in the twentieth century have these latter languages in use. Today, there is a widespread feeling among masses that Marathi is the cultural and religious language of Goa and Goans, especially Hindus, which has been reflected in the political and administrative decisions and actions in the democratic polity<sup>18</sup>.

Marathi as one of the major modern languages on the western coast of India has a place of prominence in the regional literary and cultural scene. The evolution of the language into a literary vehicle is traced to the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D (Joshi,1978: 78)<sup>19</sup>. *Jnaneshwari*, the magnum opus written in 1290 A.D. by the saint Jnaneshwara (1275-1296 A.D.), marks the beginning of Marathi as a language capable of bringing the good and the great in the Indian tradition and philosophy into the popular discourse. This period was known for some of the saint poets, the last among them being Namdev (1270-1350 A.D.). All of them contributed to devotional poetry literature in their attempt to promote Bhagavata Dharma. As the Vijayanagara Hindu kingdom was favourable to this movement its spread helped in the evolution of language and culture of Maharashtra. The later century or two (15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>) were marked by the advent and expansion of

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<sup>18</sup> . During the Portuguese rule, Marathi was used for public official communication (like notices and instructions in the Government Bulletin/ Gazette) with Hindus and after liberation it continued to be used. With the pro-Marathi sections acquiring political power it was also proposed to be used in legislative affairs mainly debates and discussions but had to make way for Konkani as most of the legislators were not quite comfortable with Marathi, though they claimed it as their mother tongue and used it for their cultural, social and official activities.

<sup>19</sup> . The earliest literary text *Viveka Sindhu* by Mukundaraj was produced in saka 1110 i.e. 1188 A.D.

the Muslim rule during which the territory of Maharashtra witnessed the destruction and chaos in cultural and political life. It is the same period that saw the advent of the Portuguese colonial rule in Goa.

This colonial experience was unique in many ways. With specific reference to language and culture (that acquired the centre stage in the determination of the political future of Goa in the Indian subcontinent) its role deserves detailed study. Looking at the cultural and linguistic identity of Goa as the one carried through the ages as a part of local folk traditions and larger Indian tradition, ignoring the colonial intervention, will perhaps make an incomplete story. When Marathi was yet to acquire its true modern form through depiction and capturing of the social, political experiences of its speakers under the alien rule, mainly Muslims, Goa had fallen into the hands of equally alien rulers who had a stronger agenda than the one followed by the rulers of the erstwhile Maharashtra. The local language that was available for the evangelists and proselytisers who accompanied the colonial masters was the one that had been left unnurtured for almost two centuries after Namdeva (1270-1350 A.D.). The form and content of the language in use was of the pre-Maratha age, the one that was yet to realise its full potential as 'Marathi' in the modern age. The century that was marked by the grafting of the Roman Catholicism with beleaguered Hinduism<sup>20</sup> in Goa by the British Jesuit Thomas Stephens (1549-1619 A.D.) through '*lingua bramánica*' made a significant departure from the age of revival and reinforcement of the *Bhagavat Dharma* by saint Eknath (1532- 1599 A.D.) in

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<sup>20</sup> . Though the term is used here for convenience, its use started much later even in the larger Indian context; in Goa the Portuguese named locals as *gentios*, *indigenas* at different times in the colonial period.

Maharashtra through Marathi. What the later Marathi saints Tukaram (1608-1650 A.D.) and Ramadas (1608- 1682 A.D.) represented for the larger Marathi culture was different from what they would mean to those living in seventeenth century Goa (comprising of the Old Conquests mainland and islands) that was experiencing colonial catastrophe not only of a different kind but also of a much larger magnitude. This distinct development of Goa, during the crucial phase of the formation of Marathi, makes the language issue more relevant in the state formation process in independent India.

Language is the focal theme in Goan life in all its spheres. Culturally it has been the field of friction as Konkani – the language finding its own place in the family of national languages of India after a closely guarded ‘struggle’– has been considered the ‘creation’ of the European colonial power (Priolkar, 1967) by some scholars while others have seen it as the rightful sibling of the modern Indian languages (Dalgado, 1893). In political arena, its role has been of a determinant factor in the settlement of the critical issue of the standing of Goa in the federal set up in India. The only instance so far of a plebiscite<sup>21</sup>, under the Indian constitutional arrangements in over fifty years of their effect, was held in the case of Goa. It brought out the popular opinion based primarily on language and culture with regard to Goa after its liberation from the Portuguese colonial rule. The common national view is that Goa was liberated by the use of Indian military force (hence termed by many in the pro-Portuguese camp as annexation)

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<sup>21</sup> . The Opinion Poll to decide the political future of Goa, Daman and Diu (the three erstwhile Portuguese holdings on the west coast of India) in the Indian federal system was held on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1967; it provided the choice to Goan voters to decide whether or not to merge with the neighbouring Maharashtra; the main planks of the political debate over this choice were language and culture.

but it is worth noting that its integration in the Union of India was reinforced in the 'Opinion Poll' with language and culture as its prime planks .

### COLONIAL EXPERIENCE UNDER THE PORTUGUESE

The advent of the Portuguese on the Goan scene was prompted by the suggestion and request from a Hindu naval officer under the Vijayanagara kingdom<sup>22</sup>, for their help against the Adilshahi rulers. In this sense the Portuguese were the saviours of Goan Hindus from the Adilshahi atrocities. It was the political ambition of a Hindu officer Timoja to gain power for himself and the territorial gain for the Hindu kingdom (Pissurlencar, 1945)<sup>23</sup>, that formed the basis of invitation to Alfonso de Albuquerque in 1510 to attack Goa. As history would have it, what was seen as a political solution to the unwanted rule was to become a social upheaval and religious persecution in their extremes, along with the economic disaster following strengthening of the colonial rule using state religion. The colonial experience of Goa has become a phenomenon that has yet to be revealed in all its facets.

#### **Socio-cultural transformation**

The arrival of the Portuguese in Goa in 1510 A.D. marks a dramatic phase in the life of the territory of Konkan in general and Goa in particular and in a wider context, a turning point in the history of the Indian subcontinent as a whole

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<sup>22</sup> . Timoja or Timayya, finds mention in Portuguese documents as a leading Hindu politician. In one of his letters Albuquerque refers to Timoja as 'capitao do Rei de Bisnaga'.

<sup>23</sup> . Timayya's plan was to get Goa under the Vijayanagara king after the anticipated departure of the Portuguese from the place (following the defeat of the Muslim power there at his request) and be the vassal under the Vijayanagara rule controlling the affairs of Goa himself.

(Das,1994)<sup>24</sup>. In a sense, the very making of Goa - as it exists - is the work of the Portuguese rule. As they had conquered Goa in the first instance all further additions were the expansion of Goa. Hence the city of Goa was gradually made into the Portuguese State of India – *Estado da India*. Making of this new state began with the creation of a community that would be most trustworthy in terms of their loyalty and stability. For this purpose the Portuguese General Alfonso de Albuquerque arranged marriages of ‘some Mussalman women fair and of good looks and some clean men’(Cunha, 1961: 64). Some of these women were ‘of the rulers who preceded him, who had either escaped his first massacre or whose fathers and husbands had been ordered by him to be treacherously killed’<sup>25</sup>.

The Portuguese who came to India ‘in search of spices and Christians’<sup>26</sup> (Sukhthankar, 1954: 96) were invited to Goa for a different purpose as stated above. Their motive behind the capture of Goa, however, was mainly economic as they wanted to control the maritime trade route in order to end the monopoly in the eastern trade enjoyed by the Turks (Malekandathil & Mohammed: 2001). To ensure continuity in trade they needed a stronghold like Goa which they also needed to civilize through christianization. This was started soon after their arrival. In this the normal ways of persuasion and education regarding the new

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<sup>24</sup> . It put a halt to the Muslim monopoly in maritime trade and brought European culture to India. Modern history of India evolved out of the interaction between the European colonial powers reaching India following the Portuguese on the one hand and that between them and indigenous rulers on the other.

<sup>25</sup> . T. B. Cunha describes in his essay ‘The Denationalisation of Goans’ the means and methods adopted in this regard by the Portuguese, following their capture of Goa .

<sup>26</sup> .Vasco de Gama, in his first visit to Calicut at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, was asked about the cause of his visit to which he replied in these words.

faith did not work and had to be replaced by other means – use of force and threats, blackmail etc. (Mendonca, 2002) <sup>27</sup>.

In the case of religious life the natives had their own religious places and practices in place; the existence of mosques and temples side by side in the city of Goa finds mention in the early reports of the Portuguese on their capturing Goa. This was something strange for them. In their bid to start christianization the Portuguese built a cathedral in Goa followed by the establishment of the Bishopric in Goa in 1534 A.D. (Naik, 1957:27). With the appointment of Fr. Miguel Vaz as Vicar General in 1538 the proselytization process was initiated. The first major attack on the religious front was the mass destruction of the Hindu temples numbering around 160 in the whole of Tisvady as a part of the christianization drive. The organized campaign of conversion to Christianity got impetus with the arrival of Francis xavier of the Society of Jesus to Goa with his associates on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1542 as the special representative of the Pope (Naik, 1957: 28). This was followed by establishment of the Inquisition in Goa on the recommendation of Francis Xavier (Priolkar, 1961). The Jesuits have had and have much to do with the Goan society of the Portuguese making and also with the formation of Konkani, as both these features of Goan identity had their centres of prominence in the district of Salsette which was under the control of the Jesuits<sup>28</sup>. Both these had religion as the common element.

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<sup>27</sup> . Description of these methods is found in the historic essay 'Denationalisation of Goans' by T.B. Cunha.

<sup>28</sup> . Much of the debate on the issues of Goan identity and of nationalism was seen from this area during the early days of the Portuguese, as can be seen in the protests and resistance from some villages; as regards the earliest works of Konkani, especially their printing , Raichol played a significant role.

The codification of the revenue and administrative procedures and regulations practised in the territory in the early sixteenth century was compiled in the form of the *Foral* in 1526 by Afonso Mexia (Gomes Pereira, 1981: 62)<sup>29</sup>. This gave the colonisers a fair idea of the social structure and economic system prevailing in their new possessions. It was this system that was later used to force conversion on the locals and also to punish those unwilling to join the new faith (Sukhthankar, 1954: 107)<sup>30</sup>.

The European contact through the Portuguese had its own features. Portugal as a European nation had certain locational advantages that had brought them to India and Goa. European presence on the west coast of India made a difference to the local kings and rulers. With control of important ports and major maritime trade activities by the Portuguese, these local rulers would have to depend on the Portuguese, giving the latter an advantage (Shastri, 1981). Another factor was the constant conflicts among the petty rulers in which mediation between the parties or support to any one in terms of ammunition, weaponry or manpower would provide opportunities to enhance the prestige and position in the political and diplomatic sphere. This also provided opportunities to local elites to gain insights into the western skills of diplomacy and administration.

In terms of culture the Portuguese presence has made an all-pervasive impact. Destruction of temples on large scale in the islands of Goa in the first half

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<sup>29</sup> . Though, in preface to his book, Rui Gomes Pereira mentions this as 'twenty six years after the conquest of Goa by the Portuguese', in the text he mentions the year of drafting the document as 1526, which is the year commonly accepted as the correct one.

<sup>30</sup> . The property of local temples destroyed with official consent of the Portuguese was gifted to the churches constructed in place of the temples. In the villages where the conversion attempts were resisted, viz. Cuncolim, Assolna, Velim and Veroda, the comunidades were dissolved and the villages of Velim and Veroda were gifted to Joao da Silva.

of the sixteenth century followed by those in Bardez and Salsette in 1560's (*Bharat Mitra*, June 1956: 168, July 1956:190-192) marked the beginning of this change of face. It implied not merely a replacement of physical structures but the whole transformation of the socio-cultural world around the new converts. The abolition of a long living custom like *sati*, introduction of civil code that introduced the principle of equality, import of printing technology, codification of the local language, introduction of a variety of plants leading to change of cuisine were the elements of socio-cultural transformation brought by the colonial rule.

The religious scene in these coastal lands had been shaped by political changes during the past centuries. The Brahminic influence in the religious matters had gained centrality under the rule of different local dynasties and gifts of lands to Agraharas was common in the early centuries of the second millennium. Simple shelters of folk and other deities maintained by the villagers coexisted with the pagodas of vedic and sanskritic deities (of the Great Tradition that was Brahminical). These latter were often built by the royal support and were only few. But the influence of Brahmins was on the rise and consultation with them in religious matters was considered desirable. Idol worship among non-Brahmins had led to the transformation of folk deities into sanskritic deities (Dhume, 1973). The destruction of Hindu temples in hundreds in the sixteenth century Goa had a mix of such deities, as mentioned in the earlier section. In the first wave of transformation some of them acquired a pedestal but this second destruction led to annihilation of many popular deities and places of worship.

Social life in Goa at the time of the advent of the Portuguese was strictly regularised by the traditional caste system. This also meant that the economic

system was functional in the way prescribed by the caste based occupational structure. This structure in the pattern of *gaonkaris* was linked to the local temple in each village. Introducers of the new Faith brought into picture a scheme of things where these temples and deities had no place in social and economic life. This was not easy to understand for the people whose concept of community (*bhous*) and locality (*ganv*) was woven around the deity and its control over the physical or spatial, spiritual or metaphysical and also economic or material. Society and its functioning in the traditional set up was directed towards maintaining and conducting the affairs for the deity (Gomes Pereira, 1978)<sup>31</sup>.

Hierarchy and stratification linked to birth and occupation were an integral part of the system. Those who entered the new world of Christianity carried with them the baggage of caste not envisaged in that Faith. Thus, instead of establishing the Christianity practising equality of all, the Goan project of proselytisation developed a local form of it, allowing the castes to continue. In the later phases of colonial rule, especially in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, caste system played a prominent role in Goan politics (Sardesai, 1994: 180)<sup>32</sup>.

Entry of the Portuguese as a European power in the subcontinent had multiple implications in the long run – in both local and regional terms. The Portuguese had navigational abilities that gave them certain advantages in trade

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<sup>31</sup> . The two institutions of *Mazanias* and *Comunidades* were linked to the temple of local deity and the village land belonged to the deity; the village affairs were run by the *comunidade* whereas the temple control was with the *mazanias*; both these institutions had distinct functions conducted by common members in their specific capacities.

<sup>32</sup> . The two political parties of Goan Catholics operating in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were divided on caste basis – ‘Parte do indiano’ of the non-Brahmins and ‘Ultramar’ of Brahmins. Their activities were also guided by the caste rivalries more than the genuine political or economic concerns of the state as a whole.

and commerce. The local rulers who had been in constant struggle among themselves were now faced with the prospects of dealing with the power that used techniques of defence different from the ones known so far. Moreover, the mediational role acquired by the Portuguese in local conflicts of rulers in Malabar or on the western coast as a whole altered the nature of regional politics (Pearson, 1981).

Culturally the early colonisation of Goa by a European power led to a number of changes. With the attempts of christianization on large scale the cultural world of the locals was shaken drastically. Rituals and practices prevailing in the local religion had no place in the Christian worship. Deities in their variety of forms were not acceptable to the strangers who forced conversion on locals. Religious literature for the neo-converts was not available. The priests with the knowledge of local language were not available. The inbuilt unity of temporal with the spiritual could not be experienced in the new Faith. As a result the attempts to return to the local Faith or continue the practices and customs of the old Faith were common (Priolkar, 1961).

However, it should be remembered that the new Faith was not easily accepted by the locals. The upper caste Hindus, *Sinaiis*, were not ready to get converted. For others, their inferior status in the social hierarchy, economic problems and misconceptions about purity or sacredness led to their conversion. There were also methods of luring people to the new Faith, promises of better security and economic opportunities as well as threats and 'tricks' like 'polluting' people through physical touch, pollution of water bodies, food items etc. (Mendonca, 2002). There were many who accepted the new religion to save their

properties from confiscation. Methods of rumour-mongering, spying too were put to use. Saraswat Brahmins in large numbers ran away leaving all their belongings, but there were few among them who chose to give in for certain benefits. There are instances of people 'creating a situation of helplessness through tacit understanding with the missionaries' to justify the conversion. But through all such means Christianisation of the Old Conquests was achieved in the first two centuries of the Portuguese rule.

The missionaries had to learn the language and create religious literature by adopting the forms and norms of contemporary practice in the local religion<sup>33</sup>. Forms like '*ladainha*' evolved to replace certain Hindu practices habitually followed by the neo-converts<sup>34</sup>. There was a beginning made in the area of language learning that signified the dawn of the era of Orientalism (Pereira, 1970: 42)<sup>35</sup>. The seeds of inter-culturality observed by scholars today were sown in the season of banishment of Hindu customs, beliefs and practices and through the technique of ban on many rituals and performances in the land of spiritual plenty that Goa was. As we find many deities in Goa being worshipped by both Catholics and Hindus, so also many of the rituals performed traditionally by

<sup>33</sup> . Amalgamation of *Ovi* (a poetic meter) and *Purana* (a literary form) of the Indian tradition with the faith of 'Crista' resulting in the creation of '*Krista Purana*' is the instance.

<sup>34</sup> . Folk researcher Vinayak Khedekar informs on the authority of some learned Catholic priests that *Ladainha* evolved to replace the *Satya Narayan Puja* commonly performed among Goan Hindus. The singing of '*Aaratis*' in the old religion was replaced by hymns, distribution of '*prasad*' was continued as '*shirni*' (pieces of coconut kernel) and beans and even serving of food to the villagers, though only after 1950s this food included chicken. Also liquor came to be offered to guests.

<sup>35</sup> . In many European countries, Indian studies began by way of Konkani studies: Thomas Stephens (1549-1617) was the first Orientalist of England, Diogo Ribeiro (1560-1633) that of Portugal, Etienne de la Croix (17<sup>th</sup> century) of France and Karel Prikryl (1718-1785) of Czechoslovakia, - says Dr. Jose Pereira.

Hindus have continued among Catholics, often overlooked by the Church and the priests<sup>36</sup>.

The 16<sup>th</sup> century saw 'the flight of the deities' from their homes in the Portuguese occupied territories to the neighbouring ones outside their area, after their temples were razed to the ground in a frenzy by the Portuguese officials and priests. This was not merely an issue of migration or transportation of an idol, resettlement of the deity or reconstruction of a temple. The whole world of faith, of loyalty, of belonging, of relatedness, of obligation, of duty built around the deity disappeared and the people were left with a void that the missionaries and officials wanted to fill with the new religion. The '*ganv*' (village) that was 'created' and 'constructed' around the deity and the temple in their original sites could not be transferred in this dismantling of the community and it was a 'loss' that people found impossible to count or measure. The socio-cultural structure and functions as well as politico-economic rights and obligations of different sections of the inhabitants were decided in the pre-colonial system on the basis of their specific roles and placements in the temple management and village administration (Gomes Pereira, 1978)<sup>37</sup>. For the purposes such as maintenance of temples of the main and supplementary deities, conduct of the regular worship and annual festivals, sustenance of the temple functionaries and servants, meeting emergencies and calamities in the village etc. the community made provisions; different castes or occupational groups had their membership rights and collective

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<sup>36</sup>. In socio-religious occasions such as marriages among converts, certain rituals belonging to their pre-conversion status are performed at home even today without the knowledge of priests. This is confirmed through interviews with Jess Fernandes (a Catholic Konkani writer and *Tiatrist*) and Martin Menino Fernandes (a teacher and social activist).

obligations with regard to the village and temple. With deities from the villages gone, the very soul of the community was lost. The members, who were converted to Christianity were asked to adopt the new ways to be eligible to enjoy economic and social rights.

In the new settings, the shifted Hindu deities were located on the boundaries of the existing villages and this process of relocation created certain questions of the role and honour or rights and privileges to certain families or castes in the temple functions ( Dhume, 1973: 53) as also absence of some other rights and positions for large sections <sup>37</sup>. Certain demands were made on the socio-political system by these sections having some symbolic rights, honours, privileges or their absence in the changed situation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>39</sup>. Again such relocation of deities culminated into the unmaking and remaking of the deity's spatial world of '*ganv*' and in their aggregation, the 'reshaping' or 'remaking' of Goa.

### Impact On Language

What is significant for this study is the impact this whole transformation had on the language. Language here comes not only as a religious tool but also as

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<sup>37</sup> . These insights were provided in the lectures delivered by Mr. Alito Siqueira and Dr. Alexander Henn for the students of Goa University doing a course on Goa under the Department of Sociology.

<sup>38</sup> . In the major temples such as *Shantadurga* of Kavalem and *Mangesh* of Priol (Mangeshi) there are specific honours to be made in a symbolic way to individuals/ couples of non-Saraswat/ lower castes like Mahar and Gaudda. Residents of villages where these deities were/are relocated are designated as *Kullavis* (disciples) but non-Brahmins among them cannot become *Mahajans* (members of the group entitled to elect or occupy positions in the managing bodies of temples) of the major Saraswat-managed temples in Goa.

<sup>39</sup> . The case of Nakul Gurav, a traditional non-Brahmin priest in Mahalasa Temple at Mardol in mid-eighties or the practice of discrimination between *Kulavis* and *Mahajans* on the basis of caste, against which a social movement was organised around the same period are the cases in point.

an intellectual discipline, technique of communication and the tool of administration. The brief survey of impact of the Portuguese colonialism in these three areas viz. language study, technology, and language policy can make the task easy. Language study, as we know, was taken up by the missionaries with the help of some local converts among themselves. The earliest works by the missionaries were in the form of catechisms, prayers and hymns (Pinge, 1960: 14-25). These were prepared for the neo-converts in the language they followed and used. The problem was not merely about introducing the new faith, it was more of giving the neo-converts what they had been missing as a result of giving up their old one. For this project of producing the material having a resemblance to the *Puranas*, it became essential to make a systemic and scientific study of the language in the form of grammars and dictionaries, vocabularies or glossaries. It was also necessary to train new priests for the job. For this purpose the early Jesuit priests produced a grammar "*Arte da Lingua Canarim*", Franciscans prepared *Arte Grammatia da Lingua Canarina* and *Arte da Lingua Canarina*, also various other authors wrote works such as *Arte da Grammatica da Lingua Bracmana*. Fr. Francis Xavier's *Grammatica ou Observacoes Grammaticaes sobre a lingua de Concana* is one of these earliest works. Dictionaries and vocabularies such as *Vocabulario da Lingua Canarina* of Diogo Ribeiro, *Vocabulario da Lingua Concanica* of Father Antonio de Saldanha, both Jesuits also belong to this period. This exercise of scientific treatment of the language of the region viz. *Canarim* is among the earliest in the Indian context. To understand the significance of these linguistic studies with specific mention of Konkani as distinct from Marathi (*Canarim* as distinct from *Maraste*), it is necessary to look

at the other languages in the region where Konkani speaking people are found in large numbers. It must be remembered that these events of systematic study took place about four and a half centuries ago when the language map of India itself, in terms of the important languages today, was going through its early formation.

We are concerned here with the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century which is supposed to be the period of writing of the first grammar (Pereira, 1992: 27)<sup>40</sup> with the specific mention of Konkani. The three main languages in the areas of residence of the majority of Konkani speakers today are Gujarati (in the metropolis of Mumbai), Kannada (in major parts of North and South Kanara) and Marathi (in Mumbai and North Konkan). Of these the first and the last are considered as the Indo-Aryan and the second as a south Indian or a Dravidian language. Also, Marathi has a very close affinity to Konkani, which, in the opinion of some, makes the latter a dialect of the former (Prabhudesai, 1963)<sup>41</sup>.

While Konkani had its grammar and dictionaries prepared on the lines of the western discipline developing in the fifteenth century Europe, Marathi was yet to receive attention in this regard. The earliest of such philological and lexicographical exercises in case of Marathi in the authentic Marathi regions are seen only in the early years of the nineteenth century (Pinge, 1960: 31, 72 -73)<sup>42</sup>,

<sup>40</sup> Andre Vaz, A Goan laybrother is said to have prepared this on the lines of the one for Portuguese which came in the fourth decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>41</sup> V.B.Prabhudesai considered it as a Goan dialect and studied it as a Marathi dialect of the seventeenth century, to produce his Ph.D.Thesis entitled '*Sataraavyaa Shatakaateel Gomantakeeya Maraathi Bolee*' (Goan Marathi dialect in the seventeenth century) in Marathi under the guidance of A.K. Priolkar.

<sup>42</sup> The first grammar book '*Gramatica Marastta*' by a Jesuit from Goa was published in 1805, (the second edition of the one printed in Rome in 1778); also William Carey's *A Grammar of the Mahratta Language* which was prepared 'by Vydunath, Mahratta Pundit, in conjunction with Mr. William Carey, teacher of the Shanscrit and Bengalee languages' is attributed to the same year, (but 1806 in Majumdar, 1981 vol. 10 - pt.II, p.184). The Marathi-English Dictionary of 1810, prepared by William Carey was followed by some dictionary-making efforts by Dr. Drummond, Capt. Hutchinson, Gen. Kennedy and others.

just before Capt. Molesworth's (1795-1872) acclaimed work was released in 1831<sup>43</sup>. Many of those who wrote in Marathi on religious, scientific, social or other matters had come to Maharashtra either as employees of the British or through evangelical missions, and learnt the official as well as local languages with the help of local intellectuals, pundits or through interaction with common people (Pinge, 1960: 233-234). Other attempts in the earlier period were by the Jesuits and they distinguished between the languages of the North and the South Konkan. In any case it is sure that the systematic study of Marathi on modern lines in the western sense started only in the beginning of the nineteenth century i. e. almost two and a half centuries after the earliest attempts of such exercises in case of Konkani.

In respect of Gujarati the work on dictionaries and grammars can be traced back to Hemchandra's (1088 – 1172 A.D.) *Deshi Nam Mala* (list of local names) of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Sunitha bai, 1987: 11) but in terms of modern discipline the earliest of grammars of Gujarati in the modern style came in 1873<sup>44</sup>, though this language (Guzerattee) along with 'Hindoostani and Mahratta' was considered useful under the British rule and the Civil Servants were informed in the early period of the century about the promotional opportunities on acquiring their knowledge (Pinge, 1959: 101)<sup>45</sup>.

Kannada as a language of the region which has the largest Konkani speaking population in India has influenced the literary activities and genres of Konkani particularly that in *Manglluri* (Mangalore regional) variety. Because

<sup>43</sup> . 'A Dictionary Marathi and English' of 1162 pages covering 40000 words by Capt. Molesworth came as a result of six years of consistent labour and was widely praised.

<sup>44</sup> . *Narmakosh* by Narmad, 'Father of the modern Gujarati' is said to be one of the earliest in the language.

Karnataka as a whole came into contact with the European powers quite late as compared to the other western coastal territories we find the study of their language on modern lines taking shape only in the second half of the nineteenth century. Indigenous attempts to bring out dictionaries and grammars of modern Kannada, however, came earlier – in 1838 Krishnamacharya's *Hosagannada Nudigannadi* was published (Majumdar, 1991: 201).

Having seen that Konkani was the first among these major regional languages to benefit from the systematic and scientific study and analysis we are confronted with the following questions: Why were literary activities and public use of the language restricted? Did this factor affect its growth and development as a modern Indian language and a member of the language family representing modern independent India? How did the above issues affect the shaping of linguistic identity, which, in the Indian context, formed the core of the state formation process in the early decades of our federation?

Language development in the modern world is intimately connected with technology. It is the technology of printing that has helped the growth of literary activities and also education and spread of languages through literacy, creating thereby standard languages. Printing in its rudimentary form involved the issues of material and financial aspects such as the type of material or the cost of the material, and also of psychological and cultural choices like the selection of a particular set of characters for printing as well as the cultural or religious significance of the latter. These decisions were guided by the level of skills available at the time and also the exigencies of demand for the product.

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<sup>45</sup>. Excerpts from a circular in 1823 from Governor Elphinstone addressed to civil servants.

Considering the variety of tongues in vogue in the period when printing technology entered the region it was also necessary to decide on the particular form, style or variety that could be subjected to printing, thereby leading towards standardization of languages. With the writing and reproduction of the words in matter it also led to freeing the speech from the traditional sacredness that was attributed to the scriptural nature of language, moving into the direction of its secularization in multiple senses. All this was intrinsic to the process of printing and Konkani having earned the privilege of being senior in this respect ought to have been recognised as one among those others in the area, and as equal with them. This should have come as a natural consequence of language evolution and growth. But as the modern developments show, this seniority did not work to Konkani's advantage due to the pronounced inconsistencies and recurring reverses in the language policy of the Portuguese throughout their rule in Goa.

During the early Portuguese period, Goans spoke a language which was different from the literary standard of the time. This is evident from what Fr. Stephens mentioned in his introduction to his '*Krista Purana*' as 'the occasional use of words from local Brahmana language in order to make the work intelligible to them (common people)' (SarDessai, 2000: 37), while stating that the work itself was written in Marathi. Mention of *lingoa canarim* or *bramana canarim* by Thomas Stephens, *lingua Bramana Marasta* by Etienne de la Croix, *lingua bramana* or *bramana vulgar* by the Jesuits, *lingua canarina* by Fr. Gaspar de S. Minguel, *lingua Maraste* and *lingua decanica* by some others (Pinge, 1960), indicate a variety of names relating to these earliest productions on the languages on the west coast of India, especially of Konkan. Three main elements that can be

derived from all these names are *Canarina* or *Canarim* and *Deccanica* (of Canara/Deccan) commonly viewed as indicative of geographical and topographical attribute, *bramana* or *bramanica* (of Brahmins) pointing to a social section, and *Maraste* (of *Maharashtra* or great rashtra = larger state) signifying a political construction. Considering the fact that most of these were the Jesuit priests who had stayed and moved around in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries within Goa, that too in the Salsette (in South Goa of today) that was assigned to their Order, it is more likely that they had access to a specific speech variety in use during the specific period and in the limited area. All of them had learnt the language *after* their arrival here with the help of locals and through the writings of the past, which they could find in the area. It is their work alone that stands as a testimony to the claimed existence of the language called Konkani in Goa before the British era in India, which is held as the period of emergence of modern linguistic identities of the Indian vernaculars or *bhasas*. If this old language in the sub-continent had no place in the larger community of Indian languages of the twentieth century, it has, perhaps, much to do with the treatment it received from the Portuguese as a part of their larger socio-cultural policy.

### **Language Policy**

Language policy of the Portuguese can be viewed as the creation of the two agents – political and religious. In the first century of the Portuguese rule there was a clear policy of destruction of temples and mass conversion of locals to Christianity in thousands (Naik, 1957: 27-38). In modern view this could be called a part of religious policy but taking into account the period of this

devastation it will be clear that there was no separation of political and religious at that stage; though the world witnessed the separation of powers as part of Renaissance and Enlightenment, Portuguese were not the enlightened ones but medieval-minded; 'for them Church and State were one, with interests linked' (Pereira, 1992: 11). In fact the period of colonisation of Goa was both an era of christianization and a project to create a community of 'Black Portuguese' (Priolkar, 1967; Pereira, 1992). The converted people were asked to give up their traditional dress. Their modes of worship had to change. Food and its preparation were modified through constant instructions. There were specific orders to stop the use of local language, accompanied by the prescribed penalties for non-conformists. In short, the entire culture was to be thrown away or disowned. Therefore the stress on language, which is the major vehicle of culture, formed a crucial element of colonial policy.

With replacement of temples by churches in different parts of Goa in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Portuguese thought of strengthening Christianity in Goa. Their efforts to curtail and gradually abolish the symbols of paganism (including written texts and books) over the period of a century did not succeed in totally wiping out the local faith, but led to desertion of villages and towns (Naik, 1957: 42)<sup>46</sup> as a result of mass migration of Hindus to the neighbouring territories - to the north and south - outside the Portuguese control. In the shadow of Inquisition neo-converts who followed their traditional customs and practices of the earlier faith had also to follow suit. The oral tradition was

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<sup>46</sup> . In the Goa city alone the number of locals came down to 20,000 from the original four lacs by one account.

quite strong among the locals and that survived through the local speech. In order to remove the hurdle of this language in the work of consolidation of faith in Goa, the rulers issued a decree in 1684 (Priolkar, 1967: 64)<sup>47</sup> allowing only three years for every one residing within the Goan borders to learn Portuguese<sup>48</sup>. Later dictats in this regard penalised people for not being able to speak Portuguese<sup>49</sup>. This continued for almost a century, but with meagre success. The attitude of persecution of people and suppression of language<sup>50</sup> at all levels and by all means finally gave way to the realisation of inevitability of the use of local language in the missionary task. In their search for books to learn the language the priests realised the blunder they had committed in consigning all the literature in the local languages in the territory to flames<sup>51</sup>. Now the emphasis was on adoption of the language. But with earlier orders to learn Portuguese, people had started using the words and phrases in that language in the local speech to avoid penalties and sufferings. This was the stage of assimilation which, with the passage of time, resulted in the appropriation of large amount of Portuguese vocables in Konkani, giving rise to common observation that Konkani in Goa is 'devoid of its genuine form' (Sunitha Bai, 1987: 4).

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<sup>47</sup> . On June 7, 1684, Viceroy Conde de Alvor issued this decree saying that "this language (Portuguese) should be used by the people in these parts in the dealings and other contracts which they may wish to enter into, those using the vernacular being severely punished for not obeying the mandate."

<sup>48</sup> . This move on the part of the ruler was the result of clash of interests and power conflict between the European missionaries and their local counterparts particularly in Bardez which was under the Fransiscans.

<sup>49</sup> . It was announced that no marriages would take place if both the bride and the bridegroom were not conversant with Portuguese. For initiation into the religious Order, not only the aspirants but also their family members were supposed to know Portuguese language fairly well.

<sup>50</sup> . In the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century the use of Konkani was banished from education provided by the Portuguese. Even later Konkani did not figure in education inspite of government decisions recommending it.

<sup>51</sup> . Pereira, Jose, 1992 – Literary Konkani

These extreme steps on the part of the colonial rulers in the matter of language gave rise to certain identity issues. Those who were converted were kept away from Marathi literature in Bhakti tradition and elites among them were encouraged to take up Portuguese, with the provision of incentives. Among converts as well as Hindu elites, the acquisition of language brought prestige and status through the official recognition and opportunities. Many among the Goan Hindu elites worked as translators, pleaders and agents for the colonial powers. Among the Hindus, who migrated to Maharashtra, many worked for regional powers such as Peshwas during the Portuguese rule (Naik, 1957: 96-98), and for other princely states and foreign companies in the later part of the colonial era. With better economic conditions and social status, elites among them found themselves in prominent positions in administrative, academic and diplomatic spheres (*Bharat Mitra* 1959-1962: vol. 31/11-vol. 34/5). As for the converts, those who were forced to migrate in the earlier phase of colonialism, the issue was of integration with the locals in their new abodes in the coastal Tulu region of the south (like Mangalore and other parts of South Kanara) or Marathi regions beyond the Ghats to the north (areas surrounding Kolhapur and Belgaum) maintaining the new faith without ecclesiastical support or Inquisitorial threats, till the Christian church reached them<sup>52</sup>. Those who moved into Konkan

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<sup>52</sup> . Goans commonly known as 'Bardeskars' (belonging to Bardes in the North Goa of the present) who had to run away in the fear of persecution from the church for following their old customs, reached Sawantwadi, Vengurla, Malvan in the north and in the areas around Belgaum above the ghats. They were caught in between for quite long, as they had no religious authority to support. For some time, they lived in isolated hamlets outside the villages and followed the new Faith under the guidance of *Irmaos*, some senior members among them. Church authorities reached them after few years.

northwards were economically backward and struggled for survival with their language and the new faith till the parts became increasingly Marathi-ised with the state policy in 1960s<sup>53</sup>. Those who continued in Goa had to face different predicaments. The upper caste elites among Catholics, with constant pressure to adopt the western way of life with its language, accompanied by the promise of benefits under the Portuguese, created a class of people who considered themselves closer to the rulers, by appropriating the language of the latter at the cost of their local original language. The lower caste converts with no proper education of any language beyond the Roman alphabet and elementary skills in the church music learnt in parish schools, were compelled to migrate to British India as sailors, butlers and cooks living with their language but putting it to written use for communication in the Roman alphabet. Other cultural elements like music and dance were also adopted by this social strata. In their yearning for the lost past, these social strata generated a genre like '*Mando*' and '*Dekhni*' which in recent times stood for Goan heritage (BIMB, 1982: No. 135). With the language and music borrowed from the colonial rulers under compulsion, the sentiments and sensibilities of the sons and daughters of the Goan soil reverberated in the Portuguese Goa and continue to echo the past in Goa Indica.

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<sup>53</sup> . Many settled on the coastline and took to fishing and other related activities. Many sold fish to the people in the Ghats areas. With spread of education and dependence of large sections of locals on Bombay economy Marathi became the language of education and communication. After the formation of Maharashtra state this process of Marathi-isation of Konkani speaking areas was officially streamlined.

## LIBERATION AND LANGUAGE

Goa was liberated in December 1961 to integrate it with the Indian union. Though the final scene of the long struggle was written by the Indian military intervention, actually there was thinking and efforts on the part of Goans - both Hindus and Catholics – for over three decades before the actual action<sup>54</sup>, to effect such integration. Much before this, exactly a century before the liberation, a Goan representative in the Portuguese parliament had affirmed this relationship of Goa with India ( Priolkar, 1967: 4)<sup>55</sup>.

The period of this intervening century can be divided into four phases for a better understanding of the language situation in Goa. The first is the early period of association with Maharashtra (1860 – 1885). The second extends to the end of the Republic (1885 – 1926). This is followed by the third – the period of emergence of the Konkani movement (1927 –1946), which leads to the fourth - the phase of the liberation struggle (1946 – 1961) culminating in the liberation of Goa at the end of 1961.

### The early phase

The convenient point to start the survey of language scenario in nineteenth century of Goa is 1858, the year of publication of the historic *Ensaio Historico de Lingua Concani* (An Historical Essay on the Konkani Language) by J.H. da

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<sup>54</sup> . T.B.Cunha, with the help of others had formed Goa Congress Committee in 1928, in line with the other provincial committees in the princely states in India.

<sup>55</sup> .Francisco Luis Gomes, in his letter dated 5<sup>th</sup> January 1861, to the well-known French poet Lamartine, had said that he was proud of his belonging to ‘the race which wrote the *Mahabharata* and invented chess.’

Cunha Rivara<sup>56</sup> (Priolkar, 1958: 149), a Portuguese civil servant. His appeal to Konkani speakers and his efforts to start education in this mother-tongue of Goans<sup>57</sup> did not bear fruit as can be seen from the educational scenario prevailing at the time<sup>58</sup>.

While the Government and Parish elementary schools providing education in Latin and Portuguese respectively were attended by 6124 students in all (2174 in Govt. schools and the rest in Parish ones) in 1869-70, there was hardly any arrangement by the government for Marathi education in some organised form (Sardesai, 1994: 51)<sup>59</sup>. Primary education was made compulsory by the Act of 1869 but not much could be achieved due to 'the faulty teaching practice, defective text books and lack of furniture', but most importantly, 'absence of instruction in local language' (Satoskar 1973 pt. II: 9)<sup>60</sup>. The recommendations 'to teach Portuguese through the local language, to appoint teachers knowing both the languages for this purpose, to start schools in the main centres in the New Conquests and to run them in a specific manner' prompted the government to convert all the schools in the New Conquests into the mixed medium i.e. Marathi-

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<sup>56</sup> . The essay is considered as the beginning of the Renaissance period of modern Konkani and the writer as the pioneer.

<sup>57</sup> . With the patronage and planning of Cunha Rivara the details were worked out to introduce Konkani in elementary schools with clear instructions to teachers to teach in Konkani vide official Notification of the Government of Portuguese India, No. 151, dated October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1859, published in the Government Gazette No. 84 of 1859, but the scheme was opposed by the Hindus, who favoured Marathi.

<sup>58</sup> . There were Latin schools and Portuguese schools, the latter run both by Government and privately. Government also started two English schools - one each at Mapusa and Margao. By 1869 - 70, there were 112 schools of which 37 were Government schools and the rest Parish schools. Of these only 16 were in the New Conquests where almost half the population resided.

<sup>59</sup> . In 1828, Government had opened a class in the capital to teach Marathi to government servants and a Marathi primary school was started there in 1843, which seems to have been closed down sometime later. An order in 1846 made learning Marathi, Gujarati or Hindi mandatory for the interpreters in the New Conquests and in 1854 Marathi found a place as second language at the newly opened Liceu Nacional. All these arrangements were for specific purpose and did not cater to the Hindus all over Goa who felt the need for learning Marathi.

Portuguese in 1871. The only Konkani medium school started in Pernem by a retired teacher<sup>61</sup>, probably at a much later date, could not survive for long. Cunha Rivara had published three grammars and a dictionary of Konkani as a preparatory exercise pending the preparation of school text books but due to opposition from the educated Hindu elites to his plan, government banned Konkani in education by an order of 1869 (Pereira, 1971). In 1871, Government made education compulsory for the children in the age group of 7-12 residing in the two kilometre radius of the existing schools.

The private efforts for education among Goan Hindus till then were not of much academic substance either. All that their children acquired in the name of education by the age of 12–14 years were the basic skills of literacy and numeracy for their personal or family use. This system called ‘*Shennaimam*’ pattern<sup>62</sup> supplied the students with four ‘*Barpam*’ and four ‘*Terjo*’ along with the recitation of ‘*Lalit*’ and prayers (*Swayam sevak*, April 1924: 220)<sup>63</sup> essentially for preparing them to take up the economic and religious functions in the family. There was no education among Hindu girls and even in any exceptional cases, it

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<sup>60</sup>. The inspection committee appointed under the provisions of the said Act in its report mentioned these as the factors responsible for the slow progress of education.

<sup>61</sup>. This maiden attempt was by Fr. Apolonio D’Cunha, a retired Portuguese teacher who started a school in Pernem around the last decade of the nineteenth century.

<sup>62</sup>. Named after the teachers who were called *Shennaimam*, perhaps after the caste to which they generally belonged, it provided instructions to children in some landlord’s house as his employee or in the precincts of the village temple.

<sup>63</sup>. ‘*Barpam*’ literally meaning ‘writings’ comprised of four scripts viz. *Balabodh* (Nagari), *Modi* (a twisted form of Nagari in use for letter writing and record-keeping specially among landlords, businessmen in Maharashtra and Goa until the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), *Kannada* and *Hindavi* (the twisted form of Kannada). Four ‘*Terjo*’ (or calculations/computations comprising of addition and subtraction) in respect of four different currencies viz. *Asarfis*, Rupees, *Navtanks* and *Gramvs*). Numeracy skills were mainly in the form of tables of multiplication involving numbers broken down to fractionals and mixed numbers. The literacy skills were aimed at the reading of written matter in the first two scripts. ‘*Lalits*’ were the morning prayers called *Bhupalis* popular in Maharashtra.

did not go beyond mere introduction to the Nagari script and numbers with few multiplication tables. The Portuguese government, responding to public demand for Marathi schools, opened two of them – one each in Mapusa and Margao, but this was not to the satisfaction of the Hindus, who decided to help themselves in this important matter. With facilities of formal education for Hindus almost non-existent, Hindus had little social organisation or political participation. The activities they had in the name of education were of no relevance to any social or political activity within the territory, particularly the ones promoted by the colonial rulers. Around the same period, the neighbouring Maharashtra was experiencing a wave of reforms in education in the form of nationalist schools. Social awakening through different organisations and publications was gaining momentum in the major centre like Pune. With the commencement of railway link between Bombay and Goa, migration of Goans to Bombay had started in a larger degree. Those who moved to the metropolis had access to Marathi education and literature and were hence exposed to new ideas. The Marathi press in Pune and Bombay (Mumbai) had found entry to Goa in a limited way. In Goa the social scene among Hindus – even the upper castes among them – was not very promising till then, in terms of economic prospects or social awakening. The communication of new ideas was now facilitated through Marathi in a limited way and Hindu upper castes easily identified with that language as their cultural tool and political means in their search for identity. Later years strengthened these ties with efforts in education and communication in Goan Hindu community.

The publication activity in Goa, which was revived after a gap of almost half a century<sup>64</sup>, in the form of *Gazeta de Goa* in 1821 saw the private publications starting only in 1836 and over fifteen of them that appeared during the next twenty-five years were all short lived. Till 1859 all the printing activity was carried on in the government press before the first private printing press was established to publish '*O Ultramar*' followed by '*A India Portuguesa*'. All these were the attempts of the Portuguese-educated Goan catholics at self-expression and self-projection, and according to some, they published material full of personal prejudices and malice (Satoskar 1973 pt.II: 67). The last two in particular were considered as the mouthpieces of the two upper castes among Goan catholics viz. '*Bamons*' and '*Chaddos*'. For the Goan Hindus there was no opportunity for public expression as there was no printing facility available till 1853. Attempts to produce manuscript magazines such as *Sarva Sangraha* by some individuals (Sardesai, 1994: 128) had limited reach. The first Marathi periodical on modern lines published from Goa was '*Ananda Lahari*'(1870), which was followed by a monthly magazine '*Desha Sudhaaranechchhu*' in 1872. Though the monthly magazine had to be closed down, it appeared as a weekly after five years and started appealing to government for promotion of Marathi education. The periodical survived for hardly a year. For the next three years there was no Marathi periodical in Goa. In the last five years of this first phase (i. e.

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<sup>64</sup> . The first phase of publishing in Goa started with the arrival of the printing press in mid-sixteenth century for the use of the missionaries and continued till the mid-eighteenth when the publishing was totally banned and the missionaries thrown out of Goa. The second phase was started by the government initiative.

between 1880 and 1885) there was only one Marathi monthly started from Margao (*Goa Mitra*) which survived for only one year.

### **Crucial Period**

The second phase begins with the opening of the first private Marathi school with 'modern syllabus' started in 1885 at Mapusa. This was followed by many others in the villages around Mapusa in Bardez. This probably prompted the Portuguese government to start Marathi-Portuguese schools within the next three years in four different places. The private initiative however continued through the next four decades and got formalised into a strong and well organised movement. Schools were started in different places all over Goa on the model and inspiration provided by the city schools whose motivation came from the major centre of Marathi socio-cultural activities i.e., Poona and the emerging second home of Goans i.e., Bombay. These Maharashtra towns acted as models in another respect too. Taking inspiration from the *Sarvajanik Sabha* in Poona, the two leading social minded individuals from Ponda taluka, Ramachandra Panduranga alias Dada Vaidya and Pandharinath Kelekar came forward to establish the *Sarvajanik Sabha* in Mangeshi in 1888 (Naik, 1938: 96). This was followed by the opening of public libraries and reading rooms<sup>65</sup> to provide Marathi books and periodicals to locals. Similar movement in the neighbouring Maharashtra became a guiding torch for all such efforts in Goa. These efforts on

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<sup>65</sup> . The first of them was started in Marcela in 1889 and was called '*Saraswat Vidyapeeth*'. This was followed by '*Goa Hindu Pustakalaya*' (1900) in Panaji and '*Ramanath Damodar Vachan Mandir*' in Margao in the same year.

the part of Hindus to organise and develop their cultural life on the lines of Maharashtra were inspired by the initiatives on the part of leaders like Chiplunkar<sup>66</sup>, and facilitated by the periodicals in Marathi.

The local Portuguese government, on the other hand, was trying to promote Konkani, for which there were renewed efforts in the form of a plan of text-book preparation. The efforts of Cunha Rivara to introduce Konkani in education in 1860s had not gone far in the face of the government teachers' indifference and the Governor's decision to ban Konkani in schools. The Marathi interpreter to the Portuguese government, Suriaji Anand Rao (1828-1888) was also against the promotion of Konkani as a language. It was only after his death that the proposal of text-book preparation was considered. *Barao de Cumbarjua* i.e. Baron of Cumbarjua (Tomas Aquino Maura Garcez Palha), working as the Inspector of Government Primary Schools, who was interested in the local languages and had earlier published a Marathi monthly, was entrusted with this task in 1889, which he started by publishing a Konkani Primer in Devanagari in 1896 (Sardesai, 1954: 253). Another Primer in the Roman script was published in the same year by Sebastiao Teotonio de Sousa.

This is the period of the emergence of popular Goan Konkani theatre and periodicals with their sites outside Goa (Kale, 1986)<sup>67</sup>. This was also the period of the beginning of Konkani novels, the first of which came in 1890's (Naik, 1995).

All this work was of the Catholic Goans and was for their community. Also the

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66. He started the first primary school in Poona – the New English School - which became the centre of nationalist education. The organised movement for 'nationalist education' (1906 – 1932) was yet to start.

Konkani renaissance in Mangalore started with the missionary intervention of Fr. Maffei (1844-1899), who called upon the Konkani speakers to save their mother-tongue from decay<sup>68</sup>. By this time the immigrants had spent around three centuries in South Kanara and they had adopted - rather merely continued - the use of Kannada script in their writings<sup>69</sup>. South Kanara in general and Mangalore in particular had a large population of Konkani speaking Catholics from Goa and their socio-cultural communication in Konkani was restricted to religious rituals and family celebrations. The first periodical in Konkani in Kannada script – *Konkani Dirvem* - came in 1912.

At the turn of the nineteenth century the Roman script had acquired a role of a literary vehicle, a theatre language and a journalistic medium for Konkani publications<sup>70</sup>. All these activities revolved around the Konkani speaking Roman Catholic Goans settled in Goa and outside, within India and outside. The other two scripts i.e. Devanagari and Kannada were yet to make a beginning in this regard. By this time, Goa had a few institutions and organisations of the Hindu elites serving Marathi as their language of culture and social communication or public expression. These were guided mostly from the centre of Marathi culture that was Poona. Therefore the language politics, as it is seen today, comes as the issue of the twentieth century, as far as Goans are concerned. This politics has

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<sup>67</sup> . The first Konkani *tiatro* was staged in Bombay in 1892 and the first monthly magazine appeared in Poona in 1889.

<sup>68</sup> . Fr. Maffei, who compiled the Dictionary of Konkani and wrote Grammar of the language, was disturbed with the plight of Konkani due to neglect and indifference of its own children. He highlighted the beauty and strength of the language and urged its speakers to use and save the same.

<sup>69</sup> . Though it is generally believed that this is a regional peculiarity caused due to migration, it must be noted that the use of Canarese script in the writing of the native language of Goa was common in the time prior to and even after the Portuguese conquest of Goa (Ghantkar, 1993 - introduction).

<sup>70</sup> . The first Konkani novel was '*Cristao Ghorabo*' brought out in 1890, the first periodical *Udentchem Sallok* started in 1889 and the first Konkani *tiatr* *Italian Bhurgo* was staged in 1892.

relied heavily on the social dynamics and economic concerns in the neighbouring Maharashtra, especially in relation to inter-elite contests for opportunities and power. Goan Hindu elites, particularly the GSBs, their search for identity and power have been closely linked to this politics.

In this crucial phase, we find the beginning of this politics taking shape in the metropolis of Bombay and the homeland of Goa. The first decade of the twentieth century created lot of heat and dust in British India due to the Partition of Bengal, consolidation of the Congress. These events and their repercussions on Indian people were known to Goan Hindu elites through Marathi press and led to a new awakening in the form of expansion of education through more schools and libraries. The Portuguese Republic (proclaimed in 1910) had positive effect and Hindus found entry in Portuguese administration, developed their institutional and organisational network using Marathi as the medium.

The first quarter of the twentieth century witnessed the consolidation of castes in Goa through their conferences (Naik, 1938: 1-2)<sup>71</sup>. A number of educational institutions were set up in major towns of Goa<sup>72</sup>. A number

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<sup>71</sup> . Saraswats had their two conferences called '*Eki*' (Pro-Unity of all sub-castes) and '*Beki*' (pro-unity of only two major sub-castes viz. *Smartas* and *Vaishnavas*) at Mapusa and Quelem i.e. Kavale (Ponda) in 1910, Dravida Brahmins had one for the unification of *Bhatta Prabhus* and *Paddyas* in 1924 at Kapileshwari near Ponda, Vaishya Conference took place at Dhargal in Pernem (Pedne) at the end of 1925, Daivadnya Brahmins i. e. goldsmiths had one at Madgaon (Margao) in 1927. Gayaks (Devdasis) had five of them at different places in Goa between 1925 -1929. Bhandaris' Education Conference had its 13<sup>th</sup> session at Panaji in 1926. The organisers in each case used the occasion for creating a collective image and a sense of unity within the community, charting the course for better prospects for their own caste/community, resolving minor issues of dispute in different sections.

<sup>72</sup> *Goa Vidya Prasarak Mandal* of Ponda, which had its *Colegio Antonio Jose de Almeida* (A.J. de Almeida High School of current times) was established in 1911, *Shantadurga Vidyalaya of Vidya Vardhak Mandal* of Bicholim, *Damodar Vidyalaya of Margao* and many others in Cuncolim, Benaulim, Cumberjua, Pernem can be cited as examples.

of journals and periodicals started by the Hindus<sup>73</sup> under this new found freedom continued their journalistic endeavours which had begun in 1870 with *Anandalahari*<sup>74</sup> with greater consistency and vigour. With Marathi periodicals extending their circulation beyond Goa, the ideas like 'All Goa Hindu Conference'<sup>75</sup> or '*Brihan Maharashtra*' (*Swayamsevak*, August 1923)<sup>76</sup> emerged and caught the attention of a large number of Goans. In their efforts to find political representation Hindu elites also formed their *Pragatik Sangha* (*Pragatik Sangha* - constitution, 1921)<sup>77</sup>.

The confidence gained with the Republic was used by the Hindu elites to assert their cultural and religious identity, even during the dictatorial days that followed. But what this identity would represent in linguistic terms was the prime issue in the next two decades.

### Goa And The Konkani Identity

The republic gave way to dictatorial regime in Portugal in 1926 but the Hindu forces continued their crusade for self assertion. As Goan Hindu elites

<sup>73</sup> . '*Prabhat*' (1911 – 1916) of Dr. P.V.Shirgaokar - published from Panaji, '*Bharat*' (1912 - 1949) of G.P.Hegde Desai - published from Panaji and later from Quepem, '*Swayamsevak*' (1915 –1926) of V.K.Priolkar - published from Ponda, '*Bharat Mitra*' (1921 – 1982) of N.B.Naik - published from Rivona in Sanguem, and the '*Hindu*' (1924 – 1930) under the editorship of D.V.Pai published from Margao were some of the leading ones.

<sup>74</sup> . This monthly magazine was started by Suryaji Sadashiv Mahatme and survived barely for a year. Since then a few short lived attempts were seen in this regard.

<sup>75</sup> . For protection and promotion of Hindu interests in social and political life in Goa, it was suggested that dedicated Hindu volunteers should come forward (*Bharat Mitra*, 1923); the need of a strong Hindu organisation was stressed through the columns of this publication.

<sup>76</sup> . In its special issue on the theme, the editorial says that it is a new idea that makes Goa a part of Greater Maharashtra comprising the areas having Marathi speakers, beyond the Maharashtra as known to people then.

<sup>77</sup> . In the Parliamentary elections of Portugal and the local Assembly of Goa the limited franchise had proved beneficial to the Catholics. With the establishment of the Republic, Hindus had equal opportunities and *Pragatik Sangha* i.e. Progressive Association aimed at utilising them through awareness and organised effort.

gained political courage through the republic their social expression through the press and other activities questioned the government over the policy matters on the one hand and challenged the church through the campaign for 'Shuddhi'<sup>78</sup>.

This religious move was accompanied by political debate through the press run by the Hindu elites<sup>79</sup>. During this period there was a move to get Goa associated with the Indian National Congress. Goa Congress Committee was formed and duly affiliated with the Indian National Congress<sup>80</sup>. Goan Hindus in their attempt to resolve 'the dilemma of nationality'<sup>81</sup> organised the 15<sup>th</sup> session of the Marathi Sahitya Sammelan<sup>82</sup>. Interestingly, most of the presentations by Goan Saraswats in this event were in Konkani (Sardesai, 1994)<sup>83</sup>. A speech by D. V. Pai on 'Konkani – Marathi relationship' was also in Konkani. The resolution demanding education in Marathi said that Marathi was the mother-tongue of more

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<sup>78</sup> . This was the movement for reconversion of the aboriginal convert *Gaundas* back to the Hindu fold. Started by the Hindu elites in 1927, the movement was expanded in 1928 and with the help of monks of Masurashram near Satara in Maharashtra, around 8000 Goan *Gaundas* from different talukas were 'purified' in public ceremonies within one week, to allow their reentry to Hindu fold. This caused a shock in the church authorities and the government. There were arrests of some upper caste Hindus who were leading the campaign; the Masurashram monks were deported by the authorities.

<sup>79</sup> . 'Hindu', a Marathi weekly specially with 'political' objective was started in 1924 under the editorship of Dattatray Venkatesh Pai and continued till 1930. 'Pracasha' owned and edited by Venkatesh Suryarao Sardesai was a firebrand journal in Portuguese in which many secular and progressive catholics wrote under different pen-names, attacking the Archbishop Patriarch and the government on their opposition to reconversion.

<sup>80</sup> . Mr. T. B. Cunha was instrumental in this. Venkatesh Sardesai was another leader

<sup>81</sup> The editor of 'Hindu' weekly, who, in his maiden editorial on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1924 had commented that the nationality of Goa was 'under the cloud of uncertainty and to live as a nation it was essential to have the identity and work towards protecting it', was the founder of the Mandal and the General secretary of the Sammelan..

<sup>82</sup> . This literary conference of Marathi was held in Goa for the first time in Margao between 3<sup>rd</sup> –5<sup>th</sup> May 1930, under the auspices of *Gomantak Sahitya Sevak Mandal* formed in 1928 and affiliated to the *Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad*, an umbrella organisation of all the Marathi language associations in Maharashtra.

<sup>83</sup> . Most of these presentations were on the concluding day. They included singing of Konkani poems by B. W. Sawardekar, rendering of a Konkani song by Dada Vaidya, a christian Konkani song by V. S. Sukhthankar, a Konkani poem sung by G.S. Amonkar.

than half of the Goan people. But these Goans did not see any conflict between the two because they considered Konkani as a dialect of Marathi.

It was this decade that marked the beginning of the expression of Konkani identity as distinct from the Marathi one. The debate on 'the Goan language' (e.g. '*Gomantakeeya Bhasha*' by V.V.Prabhudesai of Rivona in *Bharat Mitra* in 1926) in the Marathi press in Goa and Maharashtra involved writers and journalists<sup>84</sup>. Though some periodicals like *Bharat Mitra* allowed Konkani writings in their journals they accommodated them only as a variety of Marathi and not as independent language<sup>85</sup>. It was in Bombay that the thesis of Konkani as an old independent language was presented in a series of lectures (Chavan,1924) that concluded on a note of its gloomy prospects on account of its utter neglect. This was followed by another series of lectures on the 'settlements of Goans outside Goa' (Valavalikar, 1928)<sup>86</sup> in which the history and glory of Hindu – essentially Saraswat - Goans was emphatically presented. The speaker in the latter case was himself a crusader of the cause of Konkani and had been writing in that language since the early years of the twentieth century, using the language in public addresses, struggling to prove its status as the language of Goa and Konkani.

The next decade saw certain developments to assert this Konkani identity through official means and organisational efforts. The first was done in the Census of India 1931 in which Konkani was enumerated separately from Marathi

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84 . This is seen in the Goan Marathi periodicals like '*Bharat*' and '*Hindu*' in 1925-26 and in monthly magazines like '*Navayug*' and '*Vividha Dnyana Vistara*' published from Bombay.

85 . The published material in Konkani in this period consisted of proverbs, some monologues or articles in lighter vein.

86 . Under the auspices of *Saraswat Brahman Samaj*, Shennai Goembab delivered these lectures which were attended in large numbers, and later came out in a compilation of the first four lectures as the first volume. Second volume was announced but does not seem to have been published.

for the first time, which became a matter of concern for the larger Marathi group in Maharashtra<sup>87</sup>. The publication of books and periodicals in Konkani had started in Devanagari script in a very limited way, primarily with the inspiration of Shennai Goembab<sup>88</sup>. The pioneer in book publication was the Gomantak Press in Bombay owned by a Goan Saraswat, Kashinath Shridhar Naik, who published all the books of Shennai Goembab as a mission. The only periodical in Konkani to appear in Devanagari script in that period was '*Navem Goem*', also a joint venture of the twosome, which did not continue for long. A parallel move in North Kanara was towards organising people for literary activities that included compilation of vocabulary and other language items like proverbs, idioms, folk literature etc.<sup>89</sup>. There was a group in Bombay<sup>90</sup> with its membership entirely made up of Karwar emigrants, predominantly Saraswats, who were also engaged in Konkani literary activities (*Vonvalam*, 1998 [1935]).

The public debate in the press on the status of Konkani and mostly individual endeavours of printing and publication of literature in that medium were the only public manifestations of language identity till the end of the decade. The movement for Konkani till that time was an academic and literary exercise. It was in 1939 that the social and public expression of this identity got its shape in the form of Konkani Parishad in Karwar, which was expected to become a

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<sup>87</sup> . The Marathi Sahitya Parishad in its session at Baroda appointed a committee to look into the matter and to give its opinion on the issue. Report of the committee was published in 1938.

<sup>88</sup> . All the major writings of Shennai Goembab on the issues related to Goa, Goans and Konkani were brought out by Gomantak Press; its proprietor Kashinath Shridhar Naik acknowledged the inspiration from Shennai Goembab and stood by him till his death in 1946. Some of the writings of Shennai Goembab were published almost a decade after his death.

<sup>89</sup> . In the first half of 1930s a group was formed in Karwar and another with a broad area to include Kumtha, Sirsi. The first was Konkani Mandal in Karwar (1934) and the second, Uttara Kannada Zilla Konkani Sahitya Mandal (1935-36).

rallying point for the Konkani people. It was here that the issue of script came up quite explicitly in the form of one of its objectives that advocated Devanagari as the 'natural' script for Konkani as it was 'the national script' (Souvenir, Parishad Golden Jubilee, 1989). As the people using the language were writing in five different scripts in different regions on the west coast, the selection of a script and its officialisation in this way had little to do with any academic or linguistic criteria or scientific or social mechanism as the guiding principle. In this sense it was a sectional and emotional choice which in later years crystallised into the politics of script. While the conflict with Marathi was still on, this additional area of dispute was to involve multiple aspects such as religion, region, nationality, and would come to be judged on dimensions of economic viability, popularity and creative productivity.

In the third session of the Parishad held in Bombay (1942), Shennai Goembab, himself as President of the Reception Committee, dealt with the wealth and strength of Konkani at length and finally got a permanent body to work for the cause of Konkani in the form of Konkani Bhasha Mandal in Bombay. His real force of argument was seen in his last piece of writing (Valavalikar, 1977: 207 – 244), which was a rejoinder<sup>91</sup> to the speech of Kaka Kalelkar appealing for the

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<sup>90</sup> . *Konkani Sahitya Sangha*, Girgaon was a literary group formed by Konkani writers on the model of the 'Ravikiran Mandal' of the prominent Marathi poets such as Madhav Julian and others.

<sup>91</sup> . His Essay '*Ain Vellar*' meaning 'at the nick of time' was written to counter Kalelkar's view that without the assistance of Maharashtra, Goan economy would become weak, social life would become isolated. Shennai Goembab argued that Goan economy had a long history and its social life was shaped independently and much earlier than that of Maharashtra.

continuation of both the scripts for Konkani in Goa<sup>92</sup> (Kalelkar, 1958: 15). This last word of the ‘Father of modern Konkani literature’ made the script issue central to the project of building the edifice of Konkani, in the eyes of Shennai’s Goan disciples<sup>93</sup>.

Kaka Kalelkar was himself a Marathi speaker but also wrote in Hindi and Gujarati. With his knowledge of the ground situation in Goa he felt that Konkani and Marathi had to co-exist in Goa. He opined that Konkani needed much more nourishment for development of its literature, which could be available through its constant interaction with Marathi, a rich language having common history with Konkani. His approach to communal harmony prompted him to say that both Roman and Devanagari scripts had to be allowed to continue for writing Konkani at least for some time. Konkani-Marathi co-operation was essential also in order to sustain the economic activity in Goa, which was too small in size and had to rely on Maharashtra as a wide market. Kalelkar underlined the cultural and social bonds between Goa and Maharashtra to show that the mutual interests of Goans and Maharashtrians were based on history and geography. According to him,

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<sup>92</sup> . Presiding over the third session of *Gomantak Marathi Sahitya Sammelan* in Bombay in 1945, Kaka Kalelkar, in his address, favoured co-existence of both Konkani and Marathi in Goa and appealed to Goan writers to love both these languages in their mutual interest. He also argued for the continuation of both the scripts – Devanagari and Roman – for writing Konkani, and publish books and other material like pamphlets issued in the interest of Goans at large in both the scripts.

<sup>93</sup> . Since 1950’s Goan youth in Bombay who worked for Konkani considered Shennai Goembab’s ‘*Yevkar Adhyakshalem Uloup*’ and ‘*Ain Vellar*’ (combined into a book) as their guide-book and planned their activities based on the suggestions contained therein .

though Konkani would be the rightful state language of liberated Goa it would remain weak without the support of Marathi.

Shennai Goembab, in response to these observations and suggestions, attacked the attitude of Goans who considered Goa as an integral part of Maharashtra. He was critical of their hatred towards Goan Catholics for the latter's claim to Portuguese identity. Questioning the wisdom of hoping to get Goa attached to Maharashtra after liberation, he criticised them for their love for slavery. In his opinion Konkani was older than Marathi and the latter had grown by exploiting the former. Hence he was against having any contact with or remaining under any obligation of Marathi. On the script issue he felt that dualism would prove detrimental to the development of the mother-tongue of Goans and as an elder daughter of the vedic language Konkani should be nurtured through Devanagari script alone. According to him, the language had survived through neglect and destitution only because of her close relationship with the vedic language and hence can be enriched through Devanagari alone. To establish the independence of Konkani and Goa Shennai Goembab offered clues to show that his ancestors were instrumental in developing Konkani and Konkani culture that could be preserved through Konkani alone.

By establishing the thesis of Goan supremacy in Konkani Shennai Goembab set an agenda for the young Konkani activists, which they followed through later decades.

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### **Language In The Liberation Struggle**

The struggle for Goa's liberation from the Portuguese rule is generally taken to be starting in 1946 with the open challenge from Lohia of the colonial restrictions on civil liberties (Mathew, 1986). Prior to this, the work of Goa Congress Committee was conducted through its Bombay branch by holding meetings, publishing writings in the form of articles in the press and booklets on the Goa related issues (Cunha, 1960), which were all in English and had a limited audience. The Goa Congress Committee had planned for a 'Political Conference' in Bombay in 1945 to mobilise support of Goan masses for its 'Quit Goa' resolution through awareness among Goans in Bombay (Sukhthankar, 1954: 335), but this had to be postponed. In the meantime a movement began in Goa under Dr. Lohia, in which public meetings were addressed and processions/demonstrations were undertaken by both Hindus and Catholics. There were people like T.B.Cunha, Evagrio Jorge, Lakshmanrao Sardesai who considered Konkani to be the people's language and others like Dr. Sukhthankar, U.V. Talaulikar who did not think so. The language debate did not get into the way of the larger debate on civil liberties but the issue was alive in the minds of different personalities. The body formed to carry on the struggle locally (named as Sanghatana Samiti i.e., Organisation Committee) could not continue unitedly and those very close to Lohia formed another group called 'Goa National Congress', which was followed by the formation of 'Gomantak Congress' by the others in the Organisation Committee. From the two names given to the groups it appears

that the cause of the dispute was possibly language<sup>94</sup>, along with other ideological issues that separated the socialists from the congressmen. In the next few years the liberation struggle as such was dormant as most of the frontline leaders<sup>95</sup>, in the Satyagraha following the Lohia episode of 1946, were sentenced to long term imprisonment with deportation in many cases.

Around this time, the Goan youth, mostly Saraswat Brahmins, attending colleges in Bombay and other towns such as Dharwar in that state, formed their Konkani literary circles on the lines of the existing Marathi ones and they were engaged in a variety of activities carried out the whole year. They had as their members many Konkani speakers from other areas, mainly the two Kanaras, but leadership generally remained with Goan students<sup>96</sup>. The demand for the use of Konkani in radio broadcasts was fulfilled in 1952 and All India Radio Bombay allotted regular time for Konkani broadcasts, through which a large number of young writers, poets and singers got opportunities. The Marathi literary conference held in Karwar in 1954 considered the issues of Goa and its language seriously and the entire Presidential Address was devoted to it (Komarpant, 1992: 243 - 269). The active involvement of people from all over India in the Satyagraha of 1954 was the result of the interest shown by the political leaders and literateurs from Maharashtra, whose mission was to liberate their 'Marathi

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<sup>94</sup> . The naming of the territory as Gomantak was always a part of the Marathi and pro-Maharashtra thinking particularly after 1920's (earlier references as *Govem* are available) whereas the Konkani side used Goa, *Goem* or *Goym* in their expressions.

<sup>95</sup> . Starting from T.B.Cunha, many nationalists such as Ram Hegade, Purushottam Kakodkar, Lakshmikant Bhembre were deported to Portugal for long periods and many others were fined and jailed for periods of a few years and their civil rights were withdrawn.

<sup>96</sup> . *Konkani Samaj* formed under the guidance of Prof. Armando Menezes in Karnataka College, Dharwad in 1945 and '*Vangmay Mandals*' in a number of Bombay Colleges around the same period were instrumental in making many youth the active workers of Konkani. Dr. Manoharrai SarDessai was a leading organiser.

brethren' from the colonial bondage. Socialists such as N.G.Goray led the movement.

The language debate continued among the Goan nationalists inside the prison<sup>97</sup>. The leadership on the Konkani side consisted of the Saraswat Brahmins and the Catholics while the Marathi group had non-Saraswats led by a Karhada Brahmin<sup>98</sup>. Being educated in Poona and because of involvement in the political mobilisation under the Socialists there, the Marathi leadership in the prison was speaking of integration on the basis of language. This group used the manuscript magazine of the inmates for teaching and popularising Hindi language among them, both Hindus and Catholics. The political education of the Catholics was the main function of the liberation efforts, according to the Marathi side. Some of the Congress members among Saraswat Brahmins were committed Konkani loyalists but many had their reservations and considered the Konkani argument untenable<sup>99</sup>. The twin work of popularisation of Konkani and political education of the Goan Catholics was continued in the period preceding liberation through free distribution of books on Gandhian thought in Roman script<sup>100</sup>.

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<sup>97</sup> . Inside the civil jail at Reis magos, the Konkani group established a *Konkani Abhyas Mandal* on 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1955 which brought out a monthly manuscript magazine *JOT* in Devanagari Konkani starting from 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1955. The slogan that guided the activity was : " The mother-tongue is our natural right". This was followed by the appearance of its Marathi-Hindi counterpart '*Gomantak*', which started on 16<sup>th</sup> September, as a reaction to the Konkani effort.

<sup>98</sup> . Nagesh Karmali and Mark Fernandes were on the forefront of Konkani side whereas the Marathi side was led by Madhav Pandit, who was approached by some others from Pedne.

<sup>99</sup> . Adv. Pandurang Mulgaonkar was on the side of Konkani while Gopal Apa Kamat, (who later became the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu) had expressed apprehensions regarding the Konkani linguistic position.

<sup>100</sup> . *Gomant Bharati*, an institution to promote Gandhian thought among Konkani speakers was established in late 1950s in Bombay and many small booklets on Gandhian principles and philosophy were published in Roman script for distribution among Goan catholics in particular.

With liberation the language debate took the centre-stage in the life of Goans. The main concerns were administration and education. For the Marathi side the time was right for 'cultural renaissance' (*Dudh Sagar*, 1968) in Goa. There were suggestions on the agenda to be adopted for attaining this objective to facilitate the transition of the territory from the status of a liberated colony to the position of the 'Nandanvan of Maharashtra'. The sessions of Marathi language and literary events such as *Marathi Shikshan Sammelan* (Margao-April 1962), *Gomantak Sahitya Sammelan* (Panaji- December1962) (both being conferences limited to Goa – first being on education and the second literary), *Maharashtra Sahitya Sammelan* (Panaji-1962) (Maharashtra literary conference) and *Maharashtra Granthalaya Parishad* (Panaji-1964) (Maharashtra Library Conference) were held in the first two years after liberation. Konkani Parishad was organised in May 1962 at Margao. In the intervening period between the first and the last of the above events came the Education Commission appointed by the Government of India to decide the issues related to education in liberated Goa<sup>101</sup>. The three - member Commission could not come to a conclusion on the crucial issue of the mother-tongue of Goan people and left it to the parents to decide the mother-tongue of their children for the purpose of elementary

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<sup>101</sup> . The Commission headed by Mr. B.N. Za had Mrs. Vijaya Mulay as the Secretary and Prof. Armando Menezes as the member. It was expected to decide on the scope and structure of the school education system, expansion of facilities, financing of education etc. The report submitted by the Commission (after hearing the views of some 75 individuals and representatives of organisations) to the central government was never sent to the local administration and only some part – particularly the one containing the recommendations for implementation – that was received by the local administration for implementation from the academic year 1962-1963.

education (Satoskar,1970)<sup>102</sup>. The Commission also recommended Devanagari script for Konkani if the latter was chosen as the medium of education. This led to contesting moves on the part of the two sides working for Konkani and Marathi<sup>103</sup>. In a sense the contest was for a script rather than for a language. Because if the Roman script widely used for Konkani by the Goan Catholics was allowed to continue in government education there would be little or no scope for the language protagonists among Hindus to demand Devanagari for Konkani<sup>104</sup>. Marathi had its own constituency already established during the past fifty years through privately run primary schools but Konkani had to start from the scratch. Text-books in Konkani prepared by the Konkani Bhasha Mandal of Bombay (as per the decision of the Bombay state in early 50's to introduce the language in education) were adopted with minor changes. Schools were started by some individual initiatives, but the enthusiasm did not last beyond the

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<sup>102</sup> . In the course of its hearings, on the issue of the medium of instruction at the elementary level, the Commission received suggestions to prescribe Konkani or Marathi exclusively and the one also for beginning in Konkani in the first two years and concluding with Marathi in the next two years of the elementary stage. There was a section among Catholics claiming English as the mother-tongue and some considered Portuguese as their mother-tongue. In this situation, the commission chose to be silent on the medium of education at elementary and higher primary as well as the secondary stage of education

<sup>103</sup> . After the *Marathi Shikshan Sammelan*, its supporter Dayanand Bandodkar came into the limelight as the saviour of Marathi and extended material and logistic support for opening of primary schools in Marathi all over Goa, recruiting teachers from Goa. In case of the private schools that were functioning before liberation, there was a problem of survival as the elementary education was now to be managed by the government. Teachers in these private schools were to become jobless. It was Bandodkar who supported them in organising their morcha in Panaji – the first of its kind in liberated Goa. Konkani protagonists on their part tried to rope in a few of the church-managed city schools to start Konkani medium. A few attempts by the Saraswat Brahmins around Ponda were a part of such moves which were short-lived.

<sup>104</sup> . Roman script was earlier in use in education even for Konkani, but only among the catholics. They had their primers in that script but not many books for subjects. Hindus had been having their education in Marathi. Devanagari script was in use among them but no one was interested in Konkani. It was possible to attract catholics through Konkani but the script they were expected to adopt was Devanagari. Hindus, irrespective of castes, have not accepted Konkani in primary education even today, except in one school run by Konkani Bhasha Mandal in Margao which has not moved beyond the elementary stage.

Opinion Poll (1967) that decided the political future of Goa in favour of separate existence.

In the course of this interim phase where socio-economic issues had evolved in relation to identity, culture, and power, language was a pivotal theme in this debate on Goa and Goans. The categories of Goans and Non-Goans/ *Bhitarle/ Bhaile* i.e., insiders versus outsiders or *Goemkar/ Ghantti* i.e., Goans and non-Goans (coming from Ghats), Maharashtrians and Indians became relevant. Formation of new classes in conflict (*Bhatkar/Mundkar* = landlord/tenant, *Bamonn-Bahujan* i.e., Brahmin meaning Saraswats versus masses or non-brahmin castes) became significant. Choice of status for Goa in the Indian federation was linked to language, culture, identity. Congress policy and positions (at national and regional levels) on Goa were a part of the discussion. All these together brought the language identity face to face with politics in Goan context. Within the language identity realm, there was an inbuilt politics of script, which will be the focus of this study.

## LANGUAGE IDENTITY AND POLITICS

Language as a vehicle of culture acts as a powerful symbol of identity. Groups and communities bound together by a language feel the sense of unity and belonging together as they share not only the wealth of the language in terms of expressions, vocabulary, literature and cultural history but more importantly, they share dreams, ideas and aspirations produced through it. Language carries identity which is complex and contested. This contested nature of identity is a product of

power relationships whether in private or public spheres (Preston, 1997: 49). This power is the essence of politics.

Language identity has been a crucial political element in the sense that the power relationships in modern age have been determined by the development and dynamics of language groups and communities. Evolution of nationalities based on languages (along with other elements) has been a hallmark of modern nationalism. Use of *bhasas* in nationalist mobilisation is a common phenomenon. Recognition of linguistic and cultural differences in modern democracies is seen as a positive political development and in multicultural situations state has to pay attention to these diversities by providing securities, concessions and privileges to linguistic minorities. Language identities are intimately linked with politics – they are both the causes and consequences of political decisions and actions.

Language is seen as ‘one of the most important manifestations of ethnic collectivities’ (Narang, 1995: 152). People relate to a language as their own and in their attempt to build the language identity they also place demands on the state in terms of respectable position to their language in state functioning. The situation becomes more complex where the language groups are more and of unequal strength. Seeking role for one’s language in diverse fields in the state domain requires mobilisation of language community. Contesting language groups in a multilingual state use their languages as tools to claim their share in economic opportunities and political power. This is done through different means.

Census as one of the institutions of power (Anderson, 1994: 163) has political value. It is through the census returns that language identities can be projected and later used to acquire political role. In this process state also plays a

crucial role in determining the potential of a language community by monitoring, managing or even manipulating the criteria for consideration of speech varieties to be considered as languages or otherwise, also categorising, classifying or clubbing together different mother-tongues etc. Census figures are used as basis for policy decisions on providing welfare measures or certain facilities in educational, cultural fields, which, in turn, enable different groups to access state resources (Singh and Manoharan, 1997).

Language movements are organised to create awareness among language speakers and members of a language community regarding the need and importance of promoting or projecting language loyalty. This awareness can be brought about through periodicals and publications, cultural performances and literary programmes. Different language and literary associations act as agents of mobilisation and consolidation of language community. This numerical strength is then used to demand certain status in education (elementary or further school system under government control), as Official Language in administration (use in government offices, courts or legislature) or communication (broadcasting under state control or in government announcements and publications like Government Gazette) to the language concerned. In this way a language community attempts to seek its share in socio-cultural and political life. Pressure groups operate in the name of language community and put forth demands in terms of preferential treatment in recruitment for state employment, state support to publication activity or literary productions etc. All these are meant to create economic and political opportunities and resources for the language community (Brass, 1974).

While doing this language leadership mostly consisting of elites acquires for itself the role of mediator between the language community and the state power. Certain provisions and safeguards proposed for the language are in real effect meant to benefit the elite group or small section within the community. In this sense language movement tends to be a discriminative device creating a privileged group that is able to make choices at the cost of others.

### ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

From the overview of history of Goa till its liberation from the Portuguese rule and integration in the Indian nation a number of issues emerge in relation to the language called Konkani and its place in Goan life and society. They can be viewed with regard to linguistics, semiotics or politics.

As regards the language, there are linguistic concerns related to its formation, morphology and phonetics. The past researchers have spoken about its emergence from the *Bal Bhasha* (Dalgado), evolution from *Maharashtri Prakrit* (Desai), amalgamation of Magadhi and Shauraseni Prakrits (Mallaya) etc. There have been studies on its grammatical connections with Sanskrit, Marathi<sup>105</sup>, Hindi or Portuguese etc. Its status as a dialect has been subjected to academic scrutiny (Prabhudesai, 1963) and its lexical wealth has been explored through a number of exercises (Ribciro, 1626; Maffei, 1883; Dalgado, 1893, 1905; Desai, 1980-1993;

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<sup>105</sup>. Basti Pundalik Venkatesh Shennai wrote in Kannada a book titled '*Konkani mattu Marathi Ivugala Tulanatmaka Vimarshhe haagu Saraswata Brahmanar Prachina Itihasa*' (Comparative study of Konkani - Marathi and the ancient history of Saraswat Brahmins) in the middle of the twentieth century.

Suneetha Bai, 1987; Kelekar, 1994; Borkar et al, 1999)<sup>106</sup>. Aspects of usage, codes, prestige and styles, standard and orthography are all significant in case of Konkani and need thorough study.

Konkani also needs to be explored in terms of semiotics. The signs and symbols used in the language, their evolution and development, orthography of Konkani under each of the scripts in use to write the language, attempts to modernise and improve script and response from the users etc. are all relevant to the study of Konkani. But that is not the scope of the present study.

What this study aims to look at is politics involved in the language issue related to Konkani. The historical emergence of Konkani linguistic identity, its manifestations in regional, religious, caste-community groups and the actions on the part of these groups to consolidate their positions and assert their identity in terms of facilities or concessions for their language, and in terms of their relation to languages and language groups, the part played by political parties and the state, especially with respect to the vote politics of the state, government consent for education and communication in that language, acquisition of constitutional status or statutory recognition for the language etc. form the field of enquiry of this study.

In this process, the questions of regional distribution, dialectical variation, linguistic diversity of the area and difference in colonial experiences of the

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<sup>106</sup> . The first in the list is available in the typescript in Central Library in Panaji-Goa; the second was 'An English-Konkani and Konkani-English Dictionary' published in Mangalore –'the first attempt of its kind in Konkani'; Msgr. S.R. Dalgado's *Diccionario Konkani-Portuguez* first published in Bombay (1983 reprint in New Delhi) and *Portuguz - Konkani* in Lisbon; Shripad Raghunath Desai of Pedne prepared a four-volume dictionary and published through his own Sitaram Prakashan from Pune, the last volume providing the genesis of Konkani language (*Konkani Bhashechi Kulakatha*); L. Suneetha bai of Cochin prepared *Konkani – Hindi – Malayalam Dictionary*'.

speakers under different powers leading to their adoption of different scripts, distinct literary forms and diverse mechanisms to maintain the language stand out as significant elements of the phenomenon. The focus of this study is the politics of script within the larger politics of language.

## METHOD AND STRUCTURE

The methodology adopted in the study involves a mix of **exploring primary sources** and use of published material in Konkani and Marathi, **personal interviews** of key persons in the events and movement linked to Konkani in different pockets in coastal South India and also **participant observation** as a delegate at conferences, seminars in Konkani and also as a member of Konkani language and literary organisations. As Konkani literature is produced in five different scripts (of which three have sizable and organised literary/ cultural activities including regular publishing), without knowledge of and ability to use them it is neither possible nor desirable to comment on the trends and developments in them. Interviews with prominent functionaries of language organisations like *Akhil Bharatiya Konkani Parishad* or *Konkani Bhasha Mandals*, promoters of regional groups and associations like *Mandd Sobhann* (Mangalore) or Kerala Konkani Academy (Kochi), or institutions such as Thomas Stephens Konkani Kendra and Dalgado Academy (both from Goa), also leaders of movements such as *Konkani Jatha* (Karnataka) and *Konkani Porjecho Avaz* (Goa) have helped to keep abreast of the views, opinions and positions of the regional groupings (as users of specific scripts) on the issues and problems concerning the language or on state policy on language etc.. Participant observation has given a

deeper understanding of the undercurrents of the language movement in different states, which, while appearing as single and united in outlook and direction, invariably represents diverse interests and intents. The unified vision of Konkani language and culture is qualified by specific regional, sectional aspirations as well as apprehensions, which are managed and manipulated at crucial events such as the sessions of the Konkani Parishad over the years or during the decisive movements/ agitations such as the Official Language agitation in Goa (1985 – 1987). In relation to recognition and achievements of Konkani, the theme of script has remained alive in the regional settings but the trade-offs and understandings between different groups, compromises reached in inter-state handling of issues, general sentiment on politics of recognition find no mention in any official or public records. In this sense politics is based in the scripts and language as social constructs.

The theme '**Politics of Script: The case of Konkani (1961 – 1992)**' will be dealt with under the following chapters. The current chapter, '**Socio-Historical Background of Konkani**', which is introductory in nature, provides a cultural and political topography of the language covering the pre-colonial and colonial history followed by the post-colonial phase. It presents the methodology adopted and defines the scope of this study.

The second chapter '**Mapping the Konkani Language Landscape**' will discuss language in the context of a modern polity, looking at the Indian language debate during the twentieth century and its linkages with the mechanics of state formation. This will be used to locate the evolution of Konkani identities and to assess the multiple language dynamics along the Konkan. It will look at aspects

such as migration, metropolis, leadership, and economic factors at work in the evolution of these identities. This chapter will examine the regional manifestation of this evolution of the Konkani identity through the language movement in Goa leading to the acquisition of Official language status for Konkani and its inclusion in the eighth schedule of the Indian Constitution..

This is followed by a discussion on '**Script as a Dress Code**' in the third chapter. The discussion begins with Konkani and its scripts followed by a brief literary history of each script. Multiliteralism and the factors causing it are touched upon, with greater attention to migration and metropolis. Internal economy of Konkani is viewed in the context of script diversity, which is followed by discussion on linguistic and cultural concerns with regard to choices of scripts. Subjecting script to socio-political perspectives such as pluralism, nationalism, liberalism and federalism, the chapter concludes with observations on interrelationship between script, culture and identity

In the fourth chapter titled '**Regional Dynamics of Language and Script**' language and script issues are analysed by reviewing the Konkani movement in its diverse dimensions. Tracing the social bases of major groups involved in the language movement, their strategies, interrelationships and benefits are investigated. Elements of caste, community, region are considered in the process of formation and functioning of these groups in order to assess relative benefits and handicaps of these groups in the course of the movement.

In the fifth chapter '**The Changing Politics of Recognition**' the discussion is taken upto the end of the twentieth century. The last quarter of the century forms the time-frame of this chapter. As the politics of script evolved over

the two decades following the liberation of Goa the language community as a whole had undergone socio-economic change and the demands on the state had increased. Economic problems like unemployment of increasing number of educated youth, policy issues like implementation of Official Language Act and competing claims of regional Konkani groups for the share in benefits of recognition to Konkani language are closely related to the script issue. Role of the Goan Hindu elites in the script politics is explained to show how the use of script as a subjective symbol has helped them in maintaining their ethnic separateness while retaining their dominance in relation to subordinate classes at the same time (Brass, 1991: 269). The chapter highlights the internal conflicts of interests within the Konkani movement.

In the sixth chapter, '**Achievements and Dilemmas of the Movement**', while drawing the conclusions from the discussion and analysis, it is attempted to see the significance of the study for understanding the issues related to language, culture and politics of Goa.

In discussing this politics the theoretical approach adopted is that of Historical- Institutionalism (Skokpol, T., and Fiorina, M., 1999: 12). For the purpose of empirical research voluntary associations are studied in terms of their evolution, social base, interests and interconnections. Attempt is made to see 'how individuals and social groups influence government and public life' and conversely to understand the 'ways in which institutions and activities of the state and union governments have influenced the identities, organisational forms, and strategies of voluntary associations' in the context of Konkani language and region.

While the issue of Konkani has contributed to the establishment of Goa as a state in the Indian union, its impact on the language community as a whole is quite uneven. Though it has touched the sections of its speakers settled in the southern states of Karnataka and Kerala, its relevance and significance has remained different for each of them. Elements of caste, class, community determine the degree of intensity of response to state policy and government decisions or actions. Forces of history, polity and economy have induced mobilisation and organisation within the different regional and caste groups in the Konkani speaking community. Formation of a single Konkani identity through language and literature has been hindered largely by the script question which is the basis of this probe into the politics of script.

## CHAPTER II: MAPPING THE KONKANI

### LANGUAGE LANDSCAPE

#### LANGUAGE AND THE MAKING OF THE MODERN POLITY

With the advent of the modern era, starting from the French Revolution, the form and functions of the nation-state have lent a prime position to language in politics. The very idea of ‘one religion-one language-one state’ placed language at the centre of the paradigm of the nation and its foundations – be it the concept of nationality or the philosophy of nationalism – made language one of its essential components (Hobsbawm, 1992: 37)<sup>1</sup>. The functioning of the state machinery involved making a choice of a language or languages for a variety of areas such as administration, judiciary, law-making, education, official communication etc. in different geographical regions and also for diverse populations within the nation-state.

The political units in modern Western Europe, each based on language, have made the position of language indispensable in any discussion on politics. Also one language having received preference and primacy in the affairs of the nation-state means that other languages are left out of the power fray. Since these excluded minority groups have language as their bond and since the dominant group uses its own language for the running of the state, the communication between the state and certain sections of people proves difficult, leading to protests and demands to learn and promote their respective languages. The issues

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<sup>1</sup>. In Hobsbawm’s view, possession of a written literary and administrative vernacular was one of the three criteria that allowed a people to be firmly classed as a nation.

of preferential treatment to particular languages, and their use in legislative, executive and judicial functions as also the initiative of the state in planning and development of the state language may face many objections from the other language groups. Even when certain protective measures are prescribed in favour of such deprived languages, their speakers may be apprehensive about such policies due to implementational hurdles (Singh, 1992: 30)

With language-nation-state phenomenon becoming common in Europe, the imagination of communities and nations based on language were facilitated by the advent of print capitalism (Anderson, 1983). There were also predictions of one world with universal language, followed by some unsuccessful attempts to create such language as a medium of global communication and control (Hobsbawm, 1992: 39). But with the dissolution of the empires, the theory of language-based nationality was challenged. Many of the erstwhile colonies tried to enter the world of nations but not with a single language as their criterion of nationhood. While the national governments had to decide on their respective national languages for use in formal official spheres of life, numerous linguistic communities within the political boundaries considered it appropriate to secure a better deal for their languages. In a bid to contain such upsurges, sometimes frequent language reforms were taken up by the official bodies, leading to the creation of varieties of national language used by different sections in different geographical regions within the state. Also as a part of nationalist movement language loyalties were promoted and these later formalised into sub-nationalities that had to be contained in the free nation. Linguistic units in the Indian federation emerged through this process of national identity formation (Brass, 1974).

Even though the provision of national and official language was aimed at bringing about unity and a sense of belonging among the citizens, the local languages of culturally strong and economically powerful sections of the society continued to be promoted as contestants and rivals in politics and culture. Identity politics hinged on language in a large number of cases. The issues of ethnicity and culture in fact could not be discussed without reference to language.

Modernisation and industrialisation also helped in a major way in the shaping of national consciousness, making nationalism a function of industrialism (Gellner, 1994: 186-187). In the case of India the linguistic consciousness in different regions accompanied the process of modernisation. Higher education in regional languages followed the establishment of Universities and introduction of language study on modern lines. Migration and urbanisation also gave an impetus to language loyalties in the urban settings.

### **Language As A Group Marker**

Language is the most important marker of group identity, at the same time it works as a barrier against complete human fulfilment (Narang, 1995: 48) when it operates in the state setting. One's language is a strong link to one's group and also a boundary to separate one from others using another language. Existence of different language groups in a state implies competing group demands on the state. State has a responsibility to balance all such demands through the mechanism of its language policy.

The language policy of a state determines the status and identity of speakers of different languages. Allocation of Official Language status to a

specific language and its denial to others offers opportunities and advantages to the users of the former in relation to the latter. The role allotted to a particular language in government functioning as well as in other social and cultural aspects such as education and communication determines the benefits enjoyable by and available to the members of that language group (Khubchandani, 1988).

State administration in a particular language creates boundaries through differential involvement and participation of speakers of different languages within the state. While the general belief is that the speech community as a whole benefits from such status to the language concerned, it is not entirely true because the very nature of formal state functions results into further categorisation and relative deprivation in terms of skills of literacy or their absence among the speakers. Certain sections of the speech community use their language in cultural life where the emphasis is on verbal and oral communication, relying on lexical repertoire pertinent to the sphere of use (Khubchandani, 1991). Other sections may build their cultural life on some other higher or esoteric language (not in regular use within the community) as their tradition but stress the use of their language for contemporary social communication. These sections use the language in both oral and written forms. The state functions necessarily involve written language and the latter sections have an advantage to that extent. They advance in terms of participation in state affairs through the language they use in writing. The sections using the language in a more regular, intimate environment but not equipped with the adequate skills of literacy are deprived of this opportunity of participation and communication. To that extent they are deprived of their democratic right.

The sense of belonging together is given by the language to a community life which is often built up into a nationality. In a multi-lingual setting the effort is to designate a particular language as official, and thereby expect others to be in a subordinate role to it and to adopt the designated language in all matters pertaining to the state. Other language groups, depending on their economic base and organisational capabilities, decide on the role they envisage for their language in response to this official designation. Group assertion in the form of demands like safeguards to language, freedom to educate children in one's own language or state support to preserve and promote its literature emerge in the public sphere as issues which are a product of the democratic dynamics of the political processes in the state.

### **Language And Power**

Language represents a resource in terms of a variety of functions and activities in a modern state. Languages have been in use for record keeping, communication and legislation. In modern democratic terms, language acts as a medium of power in a centralising state with competing collectivities (Kaviraj, 1990). The role of language in the evolution of nationalism is widely recognised. In multilingual situations the power-embeddedness of language is revealed through the contests between languages to occupy the official status, state recognition and even claims for grant of language status. In India, one can see languages such as Avadhi, Braj, Maithili being relegated to the background as dialects of Hindi, emergence of which is of much later period (Agnihotri in *Sandarbha*, No. 13: 37). Centres of political power play a major role in

determining the state language and also the literary standard of the time. In case of Hindi we find that the shift of power centre from Kannauj through Brajadesha to Delhi is reflected in the change in language use from Apabhramsa followed by Braj to Khadi Boli or Hindi as literary standards (Rai, 2001). Also the growing trend seen in the last quarter of the twentieth century to prefer education in English as language of power at the cost of mother tongue or regional languages speaks of the role of language as a lever of power.

Economic potential of language is seen in the employment opportunities based on language skills or proficiency and the resultant incomes. The legal provision of requirements of specific language as the essential pre-requisite for certain categories of jobs also entails the same linkage. Language awards economic benefits through communication networks and entertainment industry in post-industrial society. But with the forces of globalisation the global language system seems to be emerging in which 'quickly increasing number of speakers interact with each other in a dwindling number of languages, which are becoming homogeneous through the centrally imposed linguistic standards' (de Swaan, 1990: 3). With more and more languages with smaller sizes of speakers being abandoned under market pressures, migration etc. the political content of language movements is restricted to certain privileges within the marginalised state.

#### INDIAN LANGUAGE DEBATE

India as a home of thousand tongues has seen the languages functioning in varying degrees in diverse spheres of life. Language issues gained significance in the colonial period and continued to dominate the political scene at national and

regional levels in independent India. Replacement of Persian with vernaculars in legal and revenue proceedings by an Act of 1837, under the British Rule, was a significant step in the empowerment of indigenous languages and the movement for reorganizing the provinces along the linguistic lines (Narang, 1995: 138). Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century the vernacular press played a crucial role in bringing people closer through their languages. At the same time linguistic minorities were at a disadvantage and protests were seen in different parts of the country (Chaklader, 1981: 19). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Congress policy of using the vernaculars for nationalist mobilisation led to the demarcation of linguistic provinces as units of administration and co-ordination of the movement. In the course of the nationalist struggle the regional groups realised the power of local languages in uniting people and this linguistic potential later became a tool for political demands of regional autonomy. Congress-led nationalist movement was supplemented by the movement to propagate Hindi as a national cause in a bid to make it a National Language. In the course of nationalist mobilisation Congress had understood the problems of using language as the basis of creating administrative units; Dhar Commission (1948) appointed by the Constituent Assembly and the JVP committee (1948) appointed by the Congress to look into the issues had rejected the principle of linguistic states, but against these studied observations on the issue the Congress leaders were presented with demands for autonomy to linguistic regions. As they tried to seek time in order to settle the immediate and urgent issues confronting the nation, linguistic movements gathered momentum and compelled the government to act. The Linguistic Re-organisation of states, while trying to resolve the tangle, raised the hopes and

aspirations of those left out. Regional languages being allowed to function within the state boundaries, nation had to decide on the language for all-India use.

Issues of National and Official Language were discussed at length in the Constituent Assembly but left to be decided and resolved by the future. The question of the role of English in independent India was also crucial in relation to both national and regional governments. The continuance of English, or its replacement, in administration, education and communication would be decisive in terms of the objective of democratic functioning through the peoples' languages. In this process, while certain languages became the state languages, some others inspite of having numerical strength and territorial contiguity were left out of this arrangement. Having no role in the state functioning for their language, the speakers of the latter mobilised language movements leading to demands for regional autonomy.

### **National And Official Language**

With the imminent exit of the British colonial government the arrangements for self-rule were planned through the Constitution-making exercise. The democratic system of a multilingual nation had to be run in indigenous language to signify the spirit of independence. The choice of native language for this purpose was important. The National movement had projected Hindi as people's language and suggested its elevation as a National language. In addition to this emotional aspect there was another and more important issue of which should be the Official Language in which the National government was to conduct its affairs. The Constituent Assembly in its debates attempted to address

this issue. But the very composition of the Assembly being 'strikingly undemocratic' the choice of language was determined by the class interests of its members (Bapuji, 1994: 58). Big industrialists who aspired for the large market found English as a unifying link language whereas the newly emerging ruling class of the Hindi-Urdu region proposed Hindustani to promote their regional interests. As English could not be removed overnight from the administrative and official scene, its replacement by Hindi (ignoring Urdu after the partition) over the years was proposed, allowing 15 years for the change over, at the end of which the final decision could be taken. The language policy incorporated in the Constitution was referred to the Official Language Commission (OLC) for making recommendations in regard to its implementation. The terms of reference of the Commission being somewhat restricted (as stated by the Chairman of the Commission) some 'important basic issues' were kept out of its purview. Choice of Hindi as the Official Language by the speakers of all the languages of India was taken for granted, which caused a responsible member like Dr. S.K.Chatterji to comment adversely on this majority Report in the following words:

'The report evinces a subdued but desperate haste to bring in Hindi for the whole of India .... It will mean for non-Hindi peoples the starting of a progressive imposition of Hindi in most spheres of life. The report has been prepared on the assumption (on the basis of the present Constitution of course) that Hindi has been already voluntarily accepted by the whole of India, that non-Hindi people are as much eager for its use in most spheres of our all-India affairs as speakers of Hindi and that it will be something anti-national not to try to replace English in the entire administrative, legal and political frame of India' (OLC Report, 1956: 276-277).

Well before the end of the 15-year period allowed for the transition to Hindi as the sole official language of India, the Union government tried to seek Parliamentary consent to the arrangement of replacement of English by Hindi, culminating in the passage of the Official Languages Act, 1963, which, while

bringing about a compromise on the issue, came close to satisfying most representatives of the Hindi and non-Hindi-speaking regions. But the provisions such as 'a parliamentary review committee with discretionary powers in recommending the retention or displacement of English' in ten years provoked widespread protests and sent the non-Hindi south and particularly the southern state of Tamil Nadu into flames. Massive student demonstrations, riots, and self-immolations over several months in late 1964 and early 1965 came in reaction to the directive from the centre to the states to 'report on the progress made in promoting the use of Hindi for official purposes'. This compelled the centre to forge a consensus under which the non-Hindi states were assured that Hindi would not be imposed against the wish of any one, and that English would be retained (Brass, 1999: 165-166). The implementation of the Three Language Formula was also resisted in different parts of the country. As a result the National and Official Language questions remained undecided.

### **English And Regional Languages**

The states in India, which were linguistic administrative units after 1956, were expected to run their government affairs in the respective state languages and for the purpose of communication with the Centre or between themselves they could use either Hindi or English. Most of the states (excepting Meghalaya and Nagaland) passed the Official Language (hereafter OL) Acts to provide for the use of their respective regional languages in the Bills, Notifications and other administrative works within the states (Chaklader, 1981: 46). The recruitment policy of state governments was to adopt the principle of 'sons of the soil' to

tackle the problem of rising unemployment. This was made possible by insisting on the use of Official Language in the functioning of state administration. But the higher levels of administration were manned by the All India Services personnel coming largely from an English education background.

In the states, the question of the role of English in administration and education gained significance with increasing unemployment, growing demand for industrialisation and concentration of power at the centre through the planning process. There were voices from the past that demanded banishment of English to bring regional languages to prominence in the interest of grassroot democracy and the policies that spoke of promotion of the OLs of states; on the other hand rising economic aspirations and urge for social mobility among the educated masses prompted by the forces of urbanisation and industrialisation placed a premium on English particularly in education. Development plans envisaging sectoral shifts in economic activities of people made migration to towns and cities increasingly essential and desirable. Pedagogic principle of learning through the mother-tongue and regional language did not deter the aspirations of the emerging social classes. Regional languages started getting marginalised with a growing demand for English through the spread of higher education and industrial-commercial expansion. Regional languages were provided protection under the OL Acts in administration or 'Three Language Formula' in education but the economic forces and social pressures turned the tide in favour of English.

### **Language Movements**

In the Indian situation language - together with caste and religion - has been the visible site of political contests and socio-cultural conflicts. Language

has been used in asserting group identity or confronting the political arrangements. Language movements have been organised for a number of purposes based on a plethora of language-related issues. These could be ( i ) the designation of a particular language as OL – and thereby finding political space for it, ( ii ) seeking for a language the position of vehicle of education either as a medium for schooling or at the level of higher education – so that by appropriating the cultural function it can participate in the modernisation process, ( iii ) the demands for establishing government bodies and associations for the promotion of specific language or languages, or seeking financial assistance from state government to the language bodies and associations formed by individuals and community - asking for a share in state resources, ( iv ) demanding the status of linguistic minority or inclusion of the language in the VIII schedule of the Indian Constitution so as to enjoy constitutional safeguards and concessions or privileges. Different language groups in India have used one or more of such demands and strategies to meet their aspirations.

Though the linguistic re-organisation of states is said to have resolved major linguistic problems, language movements have continued to appear with diverse demands and claims in the fifty years of the functioning of the Indian Republic. There have been demands on behalf of languages such as Kashmiri having place in the Constitution but no position of Official Language and of Maithili having long history, rich literature, but no constitutional recognition. Tribal language like Santali with an estimated six million speakers (**Manorama yearbook** 1999: 480) has been striving for its own political ground and Dogri has been crying for state patronage for its survival (Sharma in Indian Express, 24<sup>th</sup>

Nov. 2001). There are attempts to link religion, caste and other primordial loyalties to language in a bid to get the due attention in political framework (Brass, 1974). There were at least five languages waiting for the recognition from the central Sahitya Akademi since early 1980s<sup>2</sup> (Rao, 1985: 63). While some of these languages have a large number of speakers (**Manorama yearbook**, 1979: 426)<sup>3</sup> their movements have not experienced the success they have been searching for.

Konkani on the other hand has managed to rise from a 'non-language' to a 'national language'<sup>4</sup> within almost half a century. The phenomenon of the movement is unique because the language community is scattered and its history as a language beleaguered. With less than 40% of the language speakers concentrated in a territory<sup>5</sup>, the language was used to get a separate state in the scheme of linguistic states. The idea of including larger territory (occupied by the same language community living under neighbouring states as a linguistic minority) did not find favour with language elite or politicians in Goa

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<sup>2</sup> . Bhojpuri, Magahi, Khasi were waiting since early 1970s and Avadhi and Ladakhi were added to this waiting list around 1980.

<sup>3</sup> . 1971 census figures in respect of Bhojpuri (143405654), Magahi (6638495) rank them much higher in terms of number of speakers compared to others like Konkani (1522684), Dogri (1298855), Nepali (1286824) and Manipuri (780871) recognised by the Akademi

<sup>4</sup> . All the languages in the eighth schedule of the constitution are considered as national languages and find their place in official use in spheres of administration and official communication.

<sup>5</sup> .The 1981 census figures for Konkani speakers in their statewise distribution were: Goa – 600004, Maharashtra – 212214, Karnataka – 640738. Total speakers – 1584063. Only 37.88% of Konkani speakers lived in Goa whereas Karnataka had 40.45%.

(Prabhudesai in Goa Plus, TOI, Nov 1993; '*Sagar*'- Diwali 1970)<sup>6</sup>.

### Linguistic States

Formation of the first linguistic state in India was conceded to under immense pressure experienced by the nascent Indian republic from the Telugu speakers demanding separation from the Tamil dominated territory. The major reorganisation exercise in 1956 could not satisfy everyone concerned and the bifurcation of bilingual Bombay was effected in 1960. The next to follow was Punjab with its demand for *Punjabi Suba* leading to creation of Hindi speaking Haryana and the Union Territory of Chandigarh in 1966. The additions to the list of states in the next two decades were mainly with a view to ensure security by containing insurgency on the vulnerable natural land borders of India<sup>7</sup>. The addition of Goa in 1987, as the 25<sup>th</sup> state of the union was, however, on the basis of language, as can be seen from the passage of the OL Act as a precursor to the conferment of statehood.

In considering language as the major criterion for state formation the consolidation of language identity within the territory was the major factor. The

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<sup>6</sup> . In a proposal for the Vishal Gomantak (Large Goa) suggested during the decade following liberation there was a suggestion to include the following : Goa, three talukas of Karwar district (Haliyal, Supa, Karwar) from Karnataka, four talukas of Ratnagiri district (Kudal, Sawantwadi, Vengurla, Malwan) and Chandgad taluka in Kolhapur district in Maharashtra, two talukas in Belgaum district (Belgaum and Khanapur) with the estimated population of around twenty lacs, the minimum size for an autonomous state, as recommended by the Morarka Commission. But the GPCC President Purushottam Kakodkar and the UGP leadership were against such an idea.

<sup>7</sup> . After the formation of Punjab that resulted in the creation of Chandigarh as the Union territory and Haryana and Himachal Pradesh that became states as a fall out of the same process, all the additions were from the North east ( Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh) and North (Sikkim).

claimant language in every case of states formed till 1966 had a majority of population occupying contiguous territory to be included in the proposed state. The benefits – emotional and constitutional – in each case were expected to accrue to a large majority of the language group occupying the specific geographical area. In case of Goa the statehood was to benefit a small section of the language community mainly because of multiple language identities formed in the name of Konkani over centuries in the coastal areas of the south under the influence of various cultural, economic and political factors.

#### EVOLUTION OF KONKANI IDENTITIES

The case of Konkani stands out from other Indian languages in certain ways. In many others, a common administrative and judicial system under the British (even in the princely states), coupled with the contiguous geographical territory, was responsible for the mobilisation and creation of consciousness among the language elites. In case of Konkani *kshetra* (Khubchandani, 1991: 4), such administrative unity or single political control was missing, as Konkani speakers had spread on the entire west coast of India, compelled to do so by political circumstances and economic compulsions. The common destination for a section of almost all such groups of emigrant Konkanis was the prime metropolitan city of Bombay (now Mumbai) which acted as the socio-economic crucible of the twentieth century. It provided opportunities for economic development and social mobilisation, the combination of which groomed internal leadership for the emigrant groups in different spheres of activity and enterprise.

All these worked towards the evolution of regional identities (as against a single or unified Konkani identity) and provided grounds for their assertion. In short, the factors that led to the emergence of these multiple Konkani identities are migration, metropolitan influence, caste as well as community as competitors and certain economic factors. Each of these is briefly discussed here.

### **Migration**

This phenomenon has a history of a few centuries, even before the arrival of the Portuguese, in the case of Goans (Naik, 1938: 87). People from Goa had to migrate to other places as far back as the fourteenth century and the trend continued in the later centuries for a variety of reasons. Although the factor most commonly mentioned as responsible for migration of Goans is the Portuguese rule unleashing religious persecution and social restrictions in the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there were other socio-cultural and economic reasons that caused Goans to migrate in the later centuries<sup>8</sup>. In absence of contiguous language area occupied by the speech community that could shape itself into a single language community, the emigrant groups of Konkani speakers under different language areas and controlled by different political arrangements developed diverse Konkani identities.

Migration from time to time has been known, since the distant past, to Goa, since it was known as a port of repute and a trading centre for a large hinterland (Naik, 1938: 70) beyond the political boundaries of its rulers. Since

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<sup>8</sup> . The eighteenth century witnessed emigration of Goans from the Old Conquests and nineteenth century from major centres of Goa mainly in search of employment and education. In the earlier centuries, migrations took place due to epidemics.

ancient times the natural advantage of navigable seas and all season ports of Goa were utilised by the rulers from the hinterlands extending far beyond the ghats. The two Goas – Greater (*Voddlem*) and the Old (*Porne*) – were equally important at different times in history as the maritime centres and flourishing port towns as were the capitals of different dynasties. Trade and business carried out from these places was a major factor in the process of migration. This caused intermingling of tongues among polyglot floating populations, influencing the socio-cultural and linguistic life of the locals (Fernandes, 1989).

Emigration picked up in the wake of the colonial encounter even before the arrival of the Portuguese. Mention is found of those belonging to Goa having settled in the territories far south on the west coast much before the sixteenth century (Mallaya, 1992: preface). The port towns of Honnavar and Bhatkal were the main centres of Goan traders. The religious persecution under the Muslim rulers also led to such migration (Mallaya, 1992: preface). The major waves of migration are seen during the Portuguese period, the first of them being in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century primarily to coastal Kanara and Kerala and to the upghats, either to avoid conversion or to get away from the pangs of the Inquisition. The second wave of migration was in the nineteenth century and it continued in the first half of the twentieth century. This wave was essentially of a socio-economic nature and its most recent phase is taking place even today in the post-colonial times when there has been large scale migration to the West Asia mainly for economic reasons.

Migration to the Portuguese and the British colonies in Africa in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries (Albuquerque, n.d.), and from there to the

Western countries after the political transformation of these colonies in the twentieth century, has made a great impact on the cultural self-image of Goans in terms of their search for roots and peep into the pleasant past<sup>9</sup>. Immigration to Goa is also a significant factor in this regard. As a development of the mid and late twentieth century, non-Goans' entry to and settlement in Goa is linked to the economic activities like mining, and to the expansion of administrative and commercial infrastructure in Goa. Immigration was facilitated by the state policy towards Konkani - conspicuous by its absence - or non-insistence on the use of local language. The role of non-Goans in the industrial workforce or government bureaucracy in the state has its impact on the language identity and policy related to education. With the growth of tourism in the Old Conquests, trade and employment involving non-Goans on large scale are on the rise. With this development, the question of language and identity is acquiring a different dimension.

In the process of emigration the factors of push and pull have worked at different times. In the sixteenth and the seventeenth century colonial compulsions placing cultural and social demands acted as the push factors, forcing the people from Goa to move out whereas the later century marked the period of pull from the metropolitan centre of Bombay which was more socio-economic in nature. The last phase of migration to the gulf in the second half of the twentieth century is an economic phenomenon and reflects on the language scenario in many ways.

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<sup>9</sup>. There are queries from such Goans about Goa on internet and sometimes letters to the editor columns of the local dailies in English carry impressions, memories and comparisons with the present etc.

Spread of education in Goa resulted in unemployment of the educated, who left in search of employment. Being settled in Bombay for centuries, migration to the middle-east became a common feature among Goan Catholics there, which later gave a fillip to similar trends in Goa. These emigrants made their presence felt in language mobilisation through economic support to language activities and movements in favour of Konkani<sup>10</sup> and also influenced the public opinion through their choices and preferences in education and cultural life, often in favour of English and going to the extent of even pleading for introducing Arabic in school education<sup>11</sup>. The Role of Konkani individuals and groups of the middle-east in promotion of Konkani literature and arts as a part of cultural development is quite noteworthy. But their viewing of linguistic concerns in purely utilitarian terms and their preference of English education at the cost of Konkani is often seen as threat to the survival of Konkani<sup>12</sup>. The dualism seen in this approach has much to do with the traditional large scale economic compulsions on the one hand and cultural anxieties in relation to the language community as a whole on the other. A large section of these migrants come from the lower castes and classes for whom the new found economic security is an opportunity to seek some social mobility. One of the most promising tools for this is the near universal language –

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<sup>10</sup> . Writers, theatre groups and musical bands from Konkani centres such as Goa and Mangalore visited the Gulf countries either on their professional tour or to mobilise resources for language movement, certain major events or agitation. Goan writer Damodar Mauzo, different Tiatr groups and singers/artists have involved *Kuwaitkars* in this way. In Mangalore, it is common to find the names of Gulfies among the credits for books publications or release of audio cassettes. The World Konkani Convention (1995) had regional Committees in six Gulf countries, from where sizable monetary support was received.

<sup>11</sup> . Sometime ago a letter to the editor of daily Gomantak Times in Goa mentioned that it would be advisable to provide facilities for teaching Arabic in Goan schools as that would help Goan youth to migrate to the Gulf countries for employment (Lok Adalat in Gomantak Times dtd. 1. 5. 2000). Not many speak of Konkani in education, though calls and appeals to Goans for serving the mother-tongue is a common feature in the writings of many emigrants among Catholic Goans.

English. It also provides them a sense of equality with the traditional upper strata that function as model for these less privileged. Their concern for Konkani is more emotional as that is one cultural area through which they can access the political ground in their country and also project their identity in their homeland. In this way these emigrants try to balance the economic and cultural pressures as individuals and as groups.

Among Konkani-speaking emigrants the Gaud Saraswat Brahmins (GSBs) have also played a major role in defining a Konkani identity. While the GSBs in Karnataka and Kerala engaged in business and trade have spoken forcefully for Konkani and its development, all their essential and important activities have been conducted in Kannada or English (in Karnataka) and in Malayalam (in Kerala). However, they mention Konkani as their language and heritage in every public and literary forum. Their community members in the United States have acquired the nomenclature of 'Konkani' to mean a particular caste group viz. the Gaud Saraswat Brahmins of the South Kanara in particular rather than as a regional or a linguistic community<sup>13</sup>. But in case of Goan GSBs who live in the USA the collective identity is Goan rather than Konkani<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> . Eric Ozario of *Mandd Sobhann* mentions the trend of total neglect of Konkani on the part of many of those working in the Gulf countries, whose children back home are educated in English medium and made to avoid Konkani even at home. Gulf returnees too, he says, look down upon Konkani and prefer English.

<sup>13</sup> . Their quarterly newsletter '*KHABBAR*' (news) is 'North American Konkani Newsletter' meaning the newsletter of and 'for circulation to the Konkani community in North America' and the regional Associations are named to sound Konkani in their abbreviations – MAKKA (The Mid Atlantic Konkani Association), AMKA (American Midwest Konkani Association), NAKA (North America Konkani Association), TAKA (The Three River Area Konkani Association), AKA (American Konkani Association) are examples of such abbreviated names.

<sup>14</sup> . They have Goan Organization in America and Goan Association without any reference to Konkani. Same is true in case of Goan Catholics whose Goans Overseas Associations (GOA) in different countries give primacy to Goa than to Konkani, at least in their names.

In Goa the movement for Konkani is led and supported by the GSBs but their business interests and socio-cultural institutions invariably employ English or Marathi. Their major temples have been employing Marathi alone for internal communication till recently, but with the increasing contacts with their devotees in the southern states of Karnataka and Kerala and the latter's growing involvement in terms of financial support to these temples in their renovation plans/expansion projects, increasing use of English and Kannada is common. Temple records and accounts too are kept in English or Marathi in Goa, in Kannada in Karnataka and in Malayalam in Kerala. Some of the leading individuals among GSBs have taken up the cause of education but their institutions have not considered Konkani fit for the job and have never given any special place to Konkani in organised mainstream education<sup>15</sup>. No organised effort on a reasonable scale to initiate education or communication in Konkani is seen in any territory outside Goa occupied by Konkani speakers. Though GSBs have their educational, social, cultural organisations and associations in their places of domicile, they have remained secluded from the larger language community in respect of their cultural and ritual life which factor has helped in sustaining their own speech.

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<sup>15</sup>. *Mathagramastha Hindu Sabha* in Margao was headed by late A.N.Naik (Babu), ex-MLA of the pro-Konkani United Goans party for over two decades during the heydays of the Konkani movement in Goa, but there was never any proposal or attempt to start instructions in Konkani in their Damodar Vidyalaya High School. This was confirmed by the Ex-Head Master of the school, Shri. R. V. Jogalekar. Babu Naik's uncle had introduced Konkani in his school for girls (Adarsha Vanita Vidyalaya, Margao) in early 1940s, but there are no records available except a letter from Shennai Goembab congratulating the management of the school for their decision. After liberation, though there were some established city schools under the control of the GSBs, Konkani did not find a place in them immediately. The school that took up the cause of Konkani in the early years of liberation was *Shiksha Sadan* at Priol near Ponda, because of the initiative from Kelekar family there.

Konkani speaking people have migrated to distant lands within India and also outside for over five centuries. Their living in different language communities and adopting their local/ regional languages for education, commerce and trade, communication have helped them maintain cordial relations with natives. As a result of this they have often restricted the use of their own language to home and kinship group. In their new settings they had to learn local languages through their respective scripts. In their cultural memory Konkani was not a written language but a speech. For their social communication in these adopted homelands they used Konkani by applying the scripts they had learnt to write it. Consequently Konkani came to be written in different scripts. Local languages also lent their vocabulary and some structural elements to Konkani. As a result Konkani as a language in use in different territories acquired distinct forms, which became the flags of Konkani identity as seen by the Konkani speakers there. These different images of Konkani are the consequence of constant migration of its speakers but their realisation and consolidation have been shaped largely by the metropolis like Bombay in more than one sense. A small section among GSBs in the volatile phase of search for identity (in the first quarter of the twentieth century) worked towards promotion of Konkani in Devanagari script as a mark of their own community. This roughly coincides with the period of insistence on Hindi and Devanagari as a part of Indian nationalist struggle. There is nothing to suggest that this part of nationalist struggle inspired the campaign for Konkani in Devanagari, nor is there any evidence to the effect that the pioneer of the modern literary movement of Konkani i.e., Shennai Goembab was associated with any events or movement within the independence

struggle. The intra-caste contest for power and prestige among Brahmins was largely responsible for the promotion of the Konkani cause (Priolkar, 1967: 53). The scene of action was certainly the metropolis of Bombay (now Mumbai) where the caste elites from western India mingled over the centuries.

### **Role of the Metropolis**

The evolution of linguistic identities among the various language groups in the last two centuries all over the subcontinent have to be attributed to the British policies on education and administration. In case of Konkani, however, the British factor figured in a different sense though the homeland of Konkani i.e. Goa was outside the British political possessions. As Konkani speakers scattered all over the western coast of India were under different political dispensations, their cultural communication and interaction was minimal. Nevertheless, their migration to the metropolis of Bombay compensated for this handicap but not strictly in the same manner for each group. Bombay, with its potential for economic growth, provided opportunities for social mobility and economic development of regional groups and communities. This association with the metropolis, with its accompanying sense of alienation contributed to the growth of linguistic sentiments in the first half of the twentieth century and provided a favourable ground for their consolidation through community organisation, caste mobilisation and literary expression. The metropolitan locale acted as the site of debate between Marathi and Konkani for over three decades in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The *Samyukta Maharashtra* Movement in 1950s and the Maharashtra – Mysore border dispute of 1960s had their field of action in the

metropolis which was also a breeding ground for the interplay of Konkani identities.

With the political and administrative reorganisation by the British in the western parts of the south, there was migration of Konkani speakers to Bombay in a small measure in the nineteenth century. By the beginning of the twentieth century there were pockets of regional groups of Konkani speakers based on castes and communities getting established in the metropolis. With modern industrial economy offering the opportunities to more and more people, these groups found access to different occupations and professions. But their traditional caste or community consciousness was reflected in their colonies. In this dichotomy of primordial versus modern identities, their Konkani language remained neglected and to a large extent there was shift to Marathi inside homes as well as outside. In case of Chitrapur Saraswat community from South Kanara, for example, many families that settled in Bombay became Marathi speakers and produced writers in Marathi. Goan Saraswats, also those from Devadasi/ Kalavant caste and others used Marathi in their homes. The facilities of education, communication through the activity of organised printing and publishing, crystallisation of regional and linguistic sentiments among people, aroused through the political awareness caused by the British policies in the first decade of the twentieth century, resulted in the formation of caste and community associations for economic welfare. Konkani speaking groups from North Kanara, South Kanara, Goa and North Konkan occupied contiguous tracts of the city area.

They established their cultural and social associations<sup>16</sup> in the first quarter of the twentieth century and conducted their cultural life and social activities to maintain solidarity in the world of regional community groups. In many of these community programmes their regional dialect was used for communication and expression. These groups had their community journals and bulletins such as **Kanara Saraswat** of Saraswat Brahmins and **Mangalorean Review** of Kanara catholics for sharing information on the happenings and developments within the community in the metropolis as well as in the native towns and villages back home. These groups had little or no communication between themselves and had their sense of autonomy and independence as caste or community groups well preserved. In the evergrowing metropolis these regional caste and community groups acquired education and professional avenues, also seeking social mobility and economic well being in terms of class formation.

Linguistic consciousness about Konkani among Konkani speakers from different geographical regions evolved in different degrees. In case of Mangalorean Christians there was a sense of religious minority that grew with time. Goan Christians who had migrated in large numbers over a century had found better opportunities under the British and had their religious authorities to organise them. In their attempt to maintain the distinct identity based on territory, caste as well as class they had village wise clubs or '*Kudds*' (literally meaning

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<sup>16</sup> . The Goa Hindu Association (est. 1919) of Goan Hindus dominated by Saraswats, Kanara Saraswat Association (est. 1911) of the Chitrapur Saraswats, Mangalorean Catholic Association (est. 1901) of the South Kanara Catholics were some of these. *Kalavant Samuha* was formed by the members of the Devadasi caste in 1913. Goans from other castes residing in Bombay such as Bhandaris and Vaishyas also had their associations.

rooms), which functioned as community dwellings as well as socio-economic and cultural institutions. Their cultural activities and literary projects were restricted to their community and had very little connection with the movement of Konkani carried on by the upper caste Hindu Goans based in Bombay inspired by Shennai Goembab. With the rigid regimentation through the church they had virtually no common ground for cultural interaction with Konkani speaking Hindus even from Goa. Their self-image as ‘Portuguese’ and not ‘Portuguese Indians’ (Priolkar, 1967 – p.66 )<sup>17</sup> is adequate to illustrate their complete subjection to the church-state combine’s formulation of their identity as a community, though there were a few exceptions in some intellectuals and nationalists among them<sup>18</sup>. The two regional groups of Christians – from Goa and Mangalore – had their separate publications in the two scripts – Roman and Kannada respectively – without any mutual exchange or sharing of literary or other concerns. Their cultural forms too varied according to regions: while Goan Catholics enjoyed ‘*tiatr*’ that linked them to the western theatre, Mangalore christians supported and enjoyed ‘*nattak*’ on the Indian lines. For Goans lyrics were rendered as ‘*cantaram*’ on the western lines while Mangaloreans took to ones based on Hindi film songs. Chitrapur Saraswats who had their own community activities and Karwar group that carried on some literary programmes among themselves did not have any connection with each other or with the Catholics. The Karwar group, predominantly Saraswats, by and large, had accepted their Marathi identity as they had lived under the Bombay state and had their education in Marathi. Many of them wrote in Marathi but few

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<sup>17</sup> . In the census in British India Goan christians refused to be called ‘Anglo-Indians’ and demanded that they be marked as ‘Portuguese’.

<sup>18</sup> . T.B.Cunha, Evagrio Jorge, Lambert Mascarenhas and others among Goan Catholics got involved in the nationalist movement and their ideas were shaped outside the ‘Portuguese’ framework.

among them wrote also in Konkani. Chitrapur Saraswats used Konkani as a community language but with Marathi education and social communication many of them contributed to literary and creative efforts in that language<sup>19</sup>.

Even after the moves of Konkani speakers for independent literature these multiple images continued within their restricted circles and inspite of the important cultural and language events such as the Konkani Parishad (1939) designed to create a united and single image of the Konkani community nothing much changed in this regard. However, being a part of the cosmopolitan mosaic, Konkani speakers in their caste/community based regional formations nurtured linguistic and cultural bonds. As languages gained prominence in determination of political arrangements after independence, linguistic consciousness among Konkani speakers was on the rise and before the formation of Maharashtra state, there was a demand for Konkani state<sup>20</sup>.

### **Leadership**

While the language movement shaped in the metropolis was in the name of Konkani its social and cultural context was more regional and sectional. This is clearly visible in the leadership that spearheaded the Konkani cause. The widely accepted and promoted claim of leadership of Konkani points to Vaman Raghunath Varde Valavalikar (1877–1946) alias Shennai Goembab, a Goan Saraswat as the father of the modern Konkani literature, though the role of Madhav Manjunath Shanbhag (1873 -1950) from North Kanara as a crusader of

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<sup>19</sup> . The reputed publishing house in Marathi – Popular Prakashan - is a Chitrapur Saraswat venture. Mr. Bhatkal is a publisher and many others in the community have earned name as writers in Marathi

the language is equally significant. The very name Varde Valavalikar took for the cause of Konkani reflects the casteist and regional basis of his interpretation of the issue. While he spoke of Konkani as a language in its own right his stress was on delinking it from Marathi and rejecting the common view of Konkani as a dialect of Marathi. He attempted to segregate the Konkani from Maharashtra labelling the latter as '*Marathan*' (to denote its small size in contrast to Maharashtra which implied Great Country [*Maha* meaning great and *Rashtra* a country]) in order to prove the separate identity of Konkani - the region of Konkani - that would facilitate the delinking of the two speeches. In his discussion on language his focus was on caste as against the language community as a whole, as he considered Marathi as the language of the Chitpavans and Karhadas, the two major Brahmin sects in Maharashtra (Valavalikar, 1945: 265). His attempt to play on the Dravida – Gaud distinction, to show the local Brahmins in both Konkani and Maharashtra as inferior to the Gaud Saraswats and claiming the Brahmin status in every respect for his community (Valavalikar, 1945: 140-265)<sup>21</sup> are reflective of his sectarian motives. In his leadership of the Konkani movement he did not give any importance to the social realities of regional dialects and while producing texts of scholarly disposition and research value in a particular variety he did not discuss the ways and means to bring the users of numerous styles and dialects to adopt the standard that he was inventing. His

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<sup>20</sup> . George Moraes had written a small booklet around 1957 to propagate the idea of Konkani state, and the proposed state was to include the entire region inhabited by Konkani speakers. Kaka Kalelkar had also suggested a '*Sagari Prant*' (Coastal State) though without specific reference to language.

<sup>21</sup> . The essay titled '*Shennai*', which forms the main part of this collection of essays in Marathi, deals with the different Brahmin sub-castes in Maharashtra and Konkani, in order to prove the superiority of the GSBs among all. The other essay on G.N. Madgaonkar is also full of references about his caste and fixing of the title '*Shanai*' to his name. The writer's disapproval of the dress adopted by Madgaonkar or that of the latter's writing in Marathi speak of the strong caste sense.

discussion of Konkani grammar repeatedly asserts the aspects of difference from Marathi (Valavalikar, 1949).

While the leadership of Konkani among Goans in Bombay was apparently rooted in intra-caste competition, the one among Mangaloreans was more of a caste as well as community issue. The Christian immigrants from Goa are seen in the forefront of this movement. The earliest expression of Konkani linguistic identity is seen in the periodical '*Konkani Dirvem*', publication of which started in 1912<sup>22</sup>. Mangalore Christians who were also called as Canara Catholics were in a relatively weaker position in economic terms and had to survive in the Tulu speaking territory surrounded by converts to Christian faith from the local speech community and also, more importantly, amongst the Konkani speaking upper caste Gaud Saraswat Brahmins who were economically better off. Inspiration to work for Konkani came to Canara Catholics from Fr. Maffei and was assisted through the facility of printing that was made available by the Jesuits<sup>23</sup>.

Going by the issues discussed in '*Dirvem*' one is led to believe that the Goan immigrants among Christians were trying to address their identity issues and problems specifically with regard to their religious and community concerns through their writings. Much of the writing was religious or moral in content and addressed to the Catholics. With little interaction between Konkani speaking Hindus and Catholics the literary expressions of Christians were reflective of their community concerns and written in their dialect. Even the English journal like

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<sup>22</sup> . Though the title '*Konkani Dirvem*' suggests to bring out the wealth of Konkani (*Dirvem* in Mangalore Konkani means wealth), the banner line of the magazine announces '*Tujem Raj Amkam Yevn*' ('May your Kingdom be Ours'), which is a clearly religious expression. Most of the writings in *Dirvem* were mainly for the Canara Catholics.

<sup>23</sup> . Jesuits established the first printing press in Mangalore in 1882, in which some religious material was printed in the early years. '*Dirvem*' was printed in the same Kodialbail Press.

**Mangalorean Review** did not look beyond the community matters. The primary objective of the Christians was to build up the political strength through finding common grounds with the ‘other sister communities – the Goanese and East Indians’ in Bombay (**Mangalorean Review**, Christmas number, 1924) so that their voice could be heard. Same thing was true for Mangalore as can be seen from the themes discussed in the issues of ‘*Dirvem*’<sup>24</sup>. The religious and communal concern at the base of journalistic and publishing activities can be seen in the developments such as the closure of *Dirvem* after the Kodialbail Press of the Jesuits refused to print it, and the starting of ‘*Raknno*’ as a journal of the Diocese to force the demise of the former<sup>25</sup>. Also many of the periodicals that followed were promoted by the local clergy, some with patently religious names (Moraes , 1995)<sup>26</sup>.

The Konkani speaking Hindu elite in Mangalore had their own journal ‘*Saraswat*’ in Konkani edited by V.S.Kudva during the first half of the twentieth century (stopped publication in 1946), but not much is known about its literary or social contribution to the language community as a whole. ‘*Panchakadayi*’ started in 1967 also continues on similar lines with its limited objective and reach, reflecting the Saraswat life (Moraes , 1995).

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<sup>24</sup> . There were concerns regarding the properties of Catholics going to non-Catholics (16<sup>th</sup> July 1923), 16<sup>th</sup> March 1923 issue carried a Notice for a voters’ meeting in an attempt to avoid division of Christian votes in the district in Legislative Council elections.

<sup>25</sup> . *Dirvem* issues discussed education for converts as an activity helping conversion (16<sup>th</sup> July 1923), need to improve the economic conditions of converts to keep the Protestants and Hindu revivalists away (2<sup>nd</sup> May 1923), reference to the issue of preventing Catholics from seeking admission to non-denominational educational institutions (2<sup>nd</sup> August 1923). But the church wanted to have the control over the medium for which *Raknno* was started, forcing the 25 year old *Dirvem* to close down. Earlier some other journal had to face the wrath of the church authorities who forbid through an order banning the reading of it by the faithfuls.

<sup>26</sup> . *Jejurai*, *Catholic Yuwak*, *Sant Ritachi Vardi*, *Amcho Sandesh*, *Durballyancho Bhav* - are some of them.

### **Economic factors**

Evolution of identity in its social setting needs economic support. As a social group a language community needs both means and media for the communication of its ideas as well as for the organisation of its people. Konkani speaking upper caste people in their different territorial settings had developed economically over the first half of the twentieth century. In Goa Hindu elites had benefitted by the advantages of the Portuguese Republic in terms of education and social consolidation. In the middle of the twentieth century Goa had a small beginning in mining activity which brought some landholding and business families to this industry. Prior to this, through the first half of the twentieth century, the emigration of educated and semi-educated Goans to the metropolis of Bombay, other towns such as Karachi and also to other countries of Africa, either to work for the colonial governments or for trade and business, created a need to communicate within the community. Emergence of educated middle class within the Konkani speaking people scattered over the vast areas led to the growth of print media for the purpose. With an increasing number of Konkani speaking people finding employment in business and industry their regional consciousness grew in such centres. Their relative affluence coupled with the cultural memory of their past enhanced this sense of belonging. With socio-cultural organisations active in different pockets around the independence era, the mobilisation of people for the cause of language became easier. The medium of the radio (though initially opened to Konkani in mid-1940s for countering the Portuguese propaganda regarding the Goan political situation through news broadcasts for overseas Goans) was used to develop the sentiment of one language by

demanding a Konkani language section for broadcasts of other programmes. Emigrants' concern for the motherland was expressed through public expression in journals and literature published from a number of places in and outside India.

All through the first half of the twentieth century, large scale migration and change in traditional occupational structure led to emergence of new socio-economic groups. They adopted language as the symbol of their unity. Colonial government's attitude towards languages and the official mechanism of census also helped in this process. Larger participation of Goan individuals in nationalist movement and first hand experience of regional linguistic machinations through the Congress politics also led to formulation of linguistic consciousness<sup>27</sup>. The Konkani language movement in liberated Goa was organised and led by these Congressmen with sympathy and support of the national leadership of Pandit Nehru.

#### MULTIPLE LANGUAGE DYNAMICS ALONG THE KONKAN

Having looked at the factors that contributed to the evolution of a variety of Konkani identities over the first half of the twentieth century, it will be appropriate to now consider the areas in terms of their specific socio-political linkages based on the cultural and communal aspects. The four sites that can be

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<sup>27</sup> . Many of those who espoused the cause of Konkani were the active Congress workers. Adv. M M. Shanbhag and many of his colleagues at the Parishad were local Congressmen. The arrangements at the First Parishad at Karwar (1939) were made on the lines of the Congress sessions, says nonagenarian Shri. K.N.Rao, an assistant of the late Adv. Shanbhag. In the middle of the 1940s Acharya Kaka Kalelkar had major influence on some of the Congress activists from Goa who, as disciples of Shennai Goembab, later took up the work of Konkani in a broader perspective, going beyond literary sphere. The oft repeated claim of some Konkani veterans to be the 'Writers' and 'Fighters' at the same time has its roots in this consciousness.

identified clearly as the field of Konkani language politics are Bombay, Cochin, Mangalore and Goa. Each of these have their specific historical and socio-political dynamics with regard to Konkani community.

### **Bombay As A Cosmopolitan Setting**

Bombay developed into a mega-city only in the twentieth century. The old reference to it as 'islands of no much consequence' was proved false with the enterprise and policy of the colonial rulers. Different social and linguistic groups that settled in Bombay had started searching for social space in the urban set-up. This was possible only through associations based on caste, community, region and language. Certain regional groups derived advantage out of proximity to the city, and also through their traditional occupations and professions, skills etc. It was necessary for each group to organise its members into a body with a definite purpose and objectives to shape civil and political life. The concerns to ensure representation to one's group in the decision making bodies and institutions assumed priority when the policy to allow representation to all in the civic body was formed<sup>28</sup>. Mangalorean Christians called as Canara Catholics had started realising the importance of their unity in terms of seats in Municipal Corporation. North Kanara Saraswats who had become a part of Bombay since the last quarter of the nineteenth century had got into academic activities and found the economic upliftment of community members more significant. Establishment of co-operatives for this purpose was given priority<sup>29</sup>. Language remained at the family

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<sup>28</sup> . Mangalorean Review –Christmas number 1924, for example, carried an article – Our Community in Bombay (A plea for greater unity)

<sup>29</sup> . The two banks they established in the first quarter of the twentieth century were the North Kanara GSB Co-Op. Bank and the Shyamrao Vithal Co-Op. Bank.

and community level but was not considered as a tool of social recognition and cultural competition. As regards the Goan Saraswats their attempt to fit into the metropolitan scheme of things was obstructed by Chitpavan Brahmins who had secured their position in the socio-political life of the metropolis since nineteenth century (Johnson, 1970:104-105)<sup>30</sup>. At the same time the post-Tilak Congress had started considering the vernaculars for mobilisation and those in Goa looked at Marathi as the vehicle of nationalist ideology. Konkani speakers as a single linguistic group did not exist because their territorial distribution over the centuries, communal separation within the territories and caste divisions across the region - reflected in their local colonies - combined to prevent meaningful socio-cultural interaction. Added to this were perceptual variations in terms of regional and national identities across these sections. Hence 'Goanese' from Goa, 'Konkani' from North Konkan and 'Mangaloreans' from South Kanara, all under the Roman Catholic Church had their religious and social performances and events in Konkani but as distinct Konkani groups. Similar was the story with the Goan and Kanara Saraswats, whose family deities were common but beyond that their visions of political future did not match. Moreover their internal differences were carried along and maintained till the first quarter of the twentieth century in spite of attempts like the conferences in the first decade of the century in different centers of their domicile<sup>31</sup>. The traditional Konkan *kshetra*

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<sup>30</sup> . Chitpavans were on the forefront in education, journalism, politics and administration under the British and had labelled GSBs as lower in status in the Brahmin hierarchy.

<sup>31</sup> .The First and Second *Gaud Saraswat Sammelan* were held at Mangalore followed by the one in Belgaum called as '*Samyukta Gaud Saraswat Brahman Parishad*', all in the first decade of the twentieth century, the last being an attempt to remove the divisions among the Saraswat Brahmins. But this was not acceptable to a section of the community and two parallel conferences were held in Goa in 1910, popularly known as '*Eki*' (for unity) and '*Beki*' (for duality).

(Khubchandani, 1998: 148) was dismantled over the centuries of diverse colonial experience and imperial occupation by different regimes. With this complex of sectional viewpoints the Konkani identity that was shaped within the larger cosmopolitan climate was that of the political imagination for a Konkani state<sup>32</sup>.

The role of Acharya Kaka Kalelkar, a close aide of Mahatma Gandhi, in the Bombay Pradesh Congress in the early forties of the twentieth century was also significant in this regard. Kalelkar was a Gandhian close to Nehru in the formative years of the Union and his understanding of the Konkani case was of great help in the later impressions of Nehru and decisions of his government on Konkani. Through their work in the Congress Konkani writers like Bakibab Borkar, Laxmanrao Sardesai and others were able to gain support of a prominent ideologue and opinion maker in Kalelkar who stood by the Konkani protagonists through their fight for their language and their land.

The metropolis in its development as an industrial and commercial conglomerate was also responsible for developing the sense of alienation among the new settlers. In their interaction with others and competition for opportunities it was natural to look for cultural solidarities as tools of identity. The relevance and significance of administrative means like decennial census in the definition of identity was understood in the metropolitan settings. Role of such identity was more obvious in the organisational politics that Congress was trying to nurture especially through the reorganisation of its provinces on the basis of language (Majumdar, 1988).

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<sup>32</sup> . Shennai Goembab presented the idea of creating a state of '*Konkanne*', little before independence, to bring back the past glory whereas George Moraes spoke about it in a larger Bombay state in the height of the *Samyukta Maharashtra* Movement. Madhav Manjunath Shanbhag in Karwar had propagated the same idea.

### **Mangalore: Communal Divide**

In Karnataka the Konkani speaking population is spread mainly in the coastal belt stretching from Sadashivgad in the north to Mangalore in the south. Some hinterland areas like Sirsi, Haliyal, Supa in the Western Ghats are also Konkani majority areas. The North Kanara coast was in the bilingual Bombay state before its bifurcation into Maharashtra and Gujarat in 1960, whereas South Kanara was under Madras. The major concentration of Konkani speakers in South Kanara is in and around Mangalore, predominantly a Tulu speaking region. Among the Konkani speakers the two numerically strong sections are the descendants of Goan emigrants who left their homeland during the sixteenth and seventeenth century to avoid Portuguese persecution. There are mentions of earlier emigrations in a small measure for trade or employment. But the major part of the population refers to their migration as mentioned in the famous song – ‘*Rujar Saibin Goem Soddun Aili Bollara*’<sup>33</sup> – which the Mangalorean catholics claim as their history.

In Mangalore, the Konkani issue was essentially a ‘double minority’ issue from a christianity perspective. Almost the entire literature that is worth noting is produced by Catholics since they consider Konkani as their heritage. In their creative literature, journalism, theatre and music, Konkani has precedence over Kannada or any other language, in addition to its use in day to day religious activities. Though they started publishing in Konkani much later (the first

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<sup>33</sup> . The song speaks of the catastrophe in which Our Lady of Rosary had to leave Goan shores without any preparations or belongings. She had to leave her place with untied hair and with hardships she reached the shores of Mangalore, says the song.

periodical '*Konkani Dirvem*' was started in 1912, followed by '*Raknno*' which is doing well since 1938, and a number of others come out from different places; the first novel was published in 1950), they have a sizable readership and a regular demand for their publications. In education, St. Aloysius College has always taken the lead to conduct programmes in Konkani and support its study and research. Their activities in cultural field – theatre and music in particular – have been mainly in Konkani. But all their writing was and largely is still in Kannada script and in their dialect which is different from the one used by Hindus in general and Konkani speaking Hindu elites i.e., Gaud Saraswat Brahmins in particular.

Gaud Saraswat Brahmins or GSBs consider Konkani as their mother-tongue and home language. Their contribution to its development in their literary as well as cultural life is very little or negligible as compared to that among Christians. As GSBs are mostly in trade and business their communication requirements are fulfilled by Kannada and Tulu. As they have their temples and *Maths* as the centres of community activities round the year, these socio-religious institutions ought to be working for preservation of language as an integral part of culture. But it is common to see their writing in Kannada language and script and use of Kannada language in their day to day life. In terms of academic contribution to Konkani, very little is seen as compared to their service to Kannada. Rashtrakavi (National Poet) Manjeshwar Govind Pai (1883-1963) is known as a Kannada literary luminary and his justification of his pioneering work in Kannada is: 'my mother had no milk to feed me, so I had to get it from my

aunt<sup>34</sup>. Many others among Konkani Brahmins have served Kannada and taken pride in it. They do consider Konkani as their heritage, but little is seen being done from their side for preserving and promoting the same. In fact their view is more practical and they find it wise to look at Konkani as their rightful advantage in constitutional terms<sup>35</sup>. Some attempts to conduct classes and examinations in Konkani are on but in a very small measure, that too in a single institution in Mangalore. They have a Konkani Minority Language Educational Institutions Association (KMLEIA) which has little to show as its planned work for Konkani. Though they have their own educational institutions Konkani is not taught in them even as an optional language. They do not find it of any practical value to attempt its introduction<sup>36</sup>.

Other castes among Konkani speakers such as Vaishyas and Daivadnyas are scattered and have limited numerical strength, which reflects in their meagre presence on the language scene. The working caste among Konkani speakers is Kudubi or Kunnbis who are agricultural labourers or small cultivators living in relatively remote areas. They have retained Konkani at home but their education in Kannada, professional and business demands and other factors of modernisation have affected the speech variety. In their most traditional religious rituals and social customs, celebrations and festivals, the influence of local

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<sup>34</sup> . Late Manjeshwar Govind Pai was honoured as Rashtrakavi for his poetry in Kannada and in his justification for neglect of his mother-tongue Konkani he is said to have stated as above. This was mentioned in the course of discussion in the National Seminar on 'Konkani Language, Culture and Ethnicity' organised at Rashtrakavi Govind Pai Samshodhan Kendra, Udupi by Sahitya Akademi and T.M.A.Pai Foundation in November 1999.

<sup>35</sup> . Manipal group of institutions and the deemed university of MAHE (Manipal Academy of Health and Education) are Linguistic Minority Institutions under the provisions for Linguistic Minorities as per the Articles 29 and 30 of the Indian Constitution.

<sup>36</sup> . Dr. Kasturi Mohan Pai, who has been the Secretary of the Association and also of the Shreenivas Pathshala considers it impractical in view of the lack of enthusiasm on the part of parents and teachers alike.

Kannada language, culture and religious worship forms is gradually increasing in the recent past (Rao, 1998)<sup>37</sup>. Other castes like Siddis, Kharvis are Konkani speakers but have little influence on the larger language dynamics of the Konkani language in coastal Karnataka.

The work for the preservation and promotion of Konkani language among the GSBs in and around Mangalore is said to have been carried on through the temples mainly during the festivals where they present dramas in Konkani. They do not have much to show in the form of published literature in Konkani even in Kannada script. In addition to 'Panchakadayi' as a community journal, they have different associations for women, children, youth all using Konkani in their cultural presentations but turning to Kannada or English for official and public functions.

The Pai business family of Manipal (Karnataka) has a prominent role in the local language dynamics. With a strong network of educational institutions imparting general and professional training the internationally acclaimed Manipal Group has Konkani as one of its priorities for which it has established a Research Centre at Udupi. Under the auspices of T.M.A. Pai Foundation they hold drama competition, give literary awards and honour prominent Konkani personalities every year. The Foundation is a recognised Linguistic Minority institution and has managed to get most of the professional education institutions under its control to enjoy benefits of the constitutional protection available to minorities. As regards the use of Konkani in education not a single institution has any provision in that

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<sup>37</sup> . They have retained some Konkani songs of the 'Shigmo' festival celebrated after the harvest season, but there are a number of Kannada interpolations in them. Some songs are in Kannada language.

regard inspite of having a reasonably large percentage of Konkani speaking students on their rolls<sup>38</sup>. Pais have a stake in the *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* at Mangalore and any Konkani activity in the region is supported logistically or financially through the Foundation. But the introduction of Konkani in education or Konkani publication has not occurred for the obvious reason of a lack of demand. The project on Konkani Lexicon was proposed to be taken up under the Research Centre for which the initial meetings were held but the project was 'hijacked' by St. Aloysius College and has remained incomplete for the reasons never disclosed<sup>39</sup>. Research Centre of T.M.A.Pai Foundation decided to go for Tulu Lexicon instead and completed it.

The Foundation organizes a number of programmes in the name of Konkani of which many are in the nature of 'popular' events and only a few are academic or cultural activities. According to some seniors in the know of things the Foundation was an arrangement to stall the attempt of take-over by the government of some of the 'paying' and 'profit-making' institutions of the Manipal Group. The admission policy in many of the institutions for higher education in professional courses at Manipal has inbuilt preference for foreign students who bring foreign exchange; the reservation quota for linguistic minority students is filled in a subjective manner by using the specific interpretation of 'Konkani', say some, who have definite knowledge of the procedure. Equating

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<sup>38</sup> . In the colleges at Udupi and Kundapura, for instance, the percentages of students coming from Konkani speakers are in the range of 20-40%. But the Principals of the two institutions do not see any possibility of starting the instruction in Konkani language as an optional language.

<sup>39</sup> . Fr. Mark Valdar had prepared the proposal on behalf of KBMK but when it was to be finalised he was not allowed to attend the meetings or participate in the process. Then the same proposal was presented by St. Aloysius College and work on the Lexicon was started under the leadership of Dr. Willie D'Silva. But it continued for hardly a year or two after which Dr. D'Silva was not available for the work. The collected material is still with the Institute of Konkani. No one is in a position to say anything clearly on the issue.

‘Konkanism’ with ‘Saraswatism’<sup>40</sup> (based on *Kuladevatas* or family deities and *Kulaswami* or Matha links) is a part of this strategy.

In the light of this it can be said that the evolution of Konkani identity in Mangalore is almost entirely the result of Christian view of themselves. Hindus in spite of being identified as ‘Konkane’ as distinct from other local Hindus, have used language as a marker of that identity but their attitude towards it is guided by limitations to its practical utility in their broader sphere of socio-economic activities and commercial interests. They have managed to adapt to the local language and use it for their creative expression, social communication and economic interaction. Their stand on dialect, script, and literature has been guided by Goan Hindu leaders in the language movement but has not influenced the larger regional opinion on these issues because of their effective absence on this front. At the same time the influential section of Mangalore Hindus (Pai Group of Manipal) have used the language as a tool to safeguard economic and commercial interests through the constitutional provisions but found larger fundamental work unviable. On the whole the Konkani language identity in Mangalore is influenced by dynamics of communities in contest for power and prestige that a language represents in a competitive democracy.

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<sup>40</sup> . According to K.K.Pai the two are linked and the Kerala case that was used to gain legal protection to the Manipal institutions (from the proposed government take-over) enforces this thinking. Mr. Pai mentioned cases of GSB youth from the families of industrialists in Goa getting married to non-Saraswats as decline of Konkanism.

### **Cochin – The Caste As Language**

Kerala has a few pockets of Konkani speaking population, mainly in the coastal districts of Ernakulam, Kozikode, Kottayam, Alleppy. The major concentrations, however, are in the Ernakulam district with the influential section of GSBs engaged in trade and business having prominence among them. While there is a common claim of being migrants from Goa during the Portuguese rule, there are evidences to show their presence there even earlier (Mallaya, 1992). The common pattern of intra-Brahmin rivalry and conflicting claims to status vis-à-vis local Brahmins is recorded in the historical accounts (Menon, 1932: 53). The rigid caste functioning within the language community is still prevalent and the entire social life is understood in the context of *math* membership. In Kerala, the language and caste overlap in both public/ social and administrative/ official parlance.

There are other Konkani speaking castes such as Vaishyas (or Vantias, traditionally a business community but with little economic soundness in current times), Daivadnyas (goldsmiths), Devadasis (claiming, of late, to be non-Brahmin Saraswats), Kunnbis. The last among these claim to have a population of around five lac in Kerala. But their claim to Konkani is under a cloud because of a number of socio-political intricacies comprising of the functions and policies of democratic welfare state in relation to positive discrimination. As the depressed and the deprived, this caste group has been striving for the benefits available to backward castes and communities. They have received the rights of land ownership for the housing sites occupied and also the land cultivated by them. But for being included under the backward category, they have to prove their domicile

as locals, for which they need Malayalam as their language. As the term Konkani in Kerala stands for the upper caste Gaud Saraswat Brahmins, Kunnbis fear that their claim of being Konkani speakers may deprive them of the constitutional safeguards and politico-economic advantages offered by the state policy. Language dynamics in Kerala is reflective of diverse perceptions of language-culture-state relationships.

The royal documents and courts refer to GSBs as 'Conkanies' and their community '*Conkanastha Mahajanum*' (Cochin Diwan's letter of 1858 in *Konkani Vikas*, August 1979) and providing them securities and privileges of different kinds. Their trading and diplomatic skills were recognised in the past and European colonial powers found these Konkanis useful in many ways. Contribution of 'Konkanis' to commerce and economy of the region finds mention in the historical records (Mallaya, 1994: 7-12). As influential elites among Konkani speakers, maintaining the rigid caste barriers intact till today, GSBs in Kerala have managed to appropriate the power, prestige and benefits of the language to themselves using their intellect, diplomacy and resources.

The Konkani language movement in Kerala, with this background, has been obviously equated with more closed and guarded caste affair, at least till the last quarter of the twentieth century. The large number of Kunnbis claiming their roots in Goa through the deity Mallikarjuna have found the language identity a liability because of this upper caste link approved by law<sup>41</sup>. As a practical political strategy they have shifted to Malayalam as their mother-tongue for the census

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<sup>41</sup> . The GSBs having local status as 'Konkani' or 'Konkanastha', in their bid to resist the state interference in the cultural life through temple administration, managed to get their community 'the linguistic minority' status through a court verdict and have tried to keep other Konkani-speaking castes out of the spoils of this safeguard in the name of language.

purpose. Also in their emancipatory efforts under the Left-sponsored reforms, they have chosen to distance themselves from the elite Konkanis, losing contact with the language. This latter process is hastened by the education in regional language made compulsory by the state government. Other castes have also been subjected to the same predicament, which makes them Konkani and un-Konkani simultaneously<sup>42</sup>.

Using the Constitutional safeguards GSBs have got themselves declared as a Linguistic Minority on the basis of Konkani and the pioneer language body in the state - *Konkani Bhasha Prachar Sabha* (henceforth Sabha)- is an individual-centred, caste-based institution enjoying mandatory positions in advisory committees of the state government, seeking government benefits for its activities, representing on behalf of the language community and claiming the credit for all the statutory attainments for Konkani (Mallaya, 1993, 17-19 ). This has affected the extension of benefits to other Kerala Konkani speakers as a whole and prevented their large scale whole hearted participation in the promotion of the language. Some efforts of limited reach - e.g. Kerala Konkani Academy - to involve all sections of Konkani speakers are continued by others (mainly due to their resentment on being sidelined within the Sabha), though the leadership has remained invariably with the GSBs<sup>43</sup>. Some have seen this as a clash of individuals in the Sabha but going by the views of the 'father figure' of the

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<sup>42</sup> . Vaishyas, for example, look for opportunities under constitutional provisions, to be considered as *vanians* rather than vaishyas, a higher caste nomenclature, which deprives them of any scope to contest with the Tamil vanians for some state concessions. Leaders of the Devadasi community, in their efforts to wipe out the humiliating denomination of 'concubines' children' (*chedyanche*) fought a case to get themselves declared as 'non-Brahmin Saraswats'. The two instances speak of the primary concerns they have in relation to their economic and social conditions, and also of their hostility to the GSBs who claim Konkani as their monopoly. In the strong Malayalam linguistic milieu, they find little practical worth, social prestige or economic sense in preserving Konkani as their cultural possession.

Konkani movement in Kerala - Shri. N. Purushothama Mallaya - and also the observations of a number of Konkani activists it can safely be said that the conflict of caste interests is intrinsic to Kerala Konkani.

### **Goa – The Caste-Community Combine**

Goa is identified with Konkani, firstly historically as a part of the ‘authentic’ Konkani, secondly as the homeland of the Konkani-speaking people who are spread mainly on the western coast of south India or elsewhere in the country and the world, and thirdly, as the smallest state in the federation which was conferred statehood on the basis of the Konkani language. This last political decision has to do with the dynamics that determined the destiny of the territory and its people in the federal arrangement. The evolution of Konkani identity is rooted in Goan soil in the sense that: a) The multiple dynamics seen in the locales discussed hereabove have their origin in Goa in its socio-historical setting, and b) Goa presents a combination of all these in their multiple facets.

Konkani in Goa has been at the centre of controversy for a long time. There have been arguments over its origin, nature, and status. There have arisen questions regarding its constituency and its geographical terrain. Doubts have been raised regarding its cultural sanctity and national character. Problems have been posed regarding its economic sustainability and sociological complexity. Most significant of all, it has been subjected to the test and scrutiny of political identity.

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<sup>43</sup> . The Academy was headed by Prof. R. K.Rao, followed by Shri. P.G.Kamath, in the past and currently by Shri. K.R.Vasant Mani, all G.S.B.s.

At the inauguration of the liberation of Goa, the question of the very survival of Goa was paramount and it was pinned on the stand of Konkani as a language, culture, identity. This was the spill over of the debate in the nineteenth century that questioned the Brahmin status of Gaud Saraswat Brahmins. The defence of their Brahminic status was presented by Gunjekar and Sharma (Wagle, 1970), whose discussions looked at *Gomantaki* as a language<sup>44</sup>. The work of Gunjekar was primarily 'to describe the Marathi-speaking Brahmin castes in Bombay' in order to 'respond to the official interest in the matters of Indian castes' (Preface of '*Saraswati Mandal*'). To him, not only *Gomantaki* was close to Marathi because the latter evolved from the same source but it also followed Marathi closely on account of contiguity. Some time earlier, the Portuguese Chief Secretary in Goa had asked 'the Goan Youth to restore their mother-tongue (Konkani) to its rightful place' (Priolkar, 1958: 220). In the second quarter of the twentieth century Shennai Goembab had created a strong defence against the attempted 'Goa's Marathi identity' thesis through his creative and research-based literary works.

The issue had been debated in the first half of the twentieth century mainly in the Marathi press in Goa and Bombay as has been discussed earlier. The real problem of asserting this identity was posed by the liberation. On the one hand there was a section of Goan Hindu population that was illiterate, economically backward and politically inexperienced. Its views were guided by the upper caste landed gentry and religious institutions. The lower caste Catholic population was

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<sup>44</sup> . In his *Saraswati Mandal* published in 1884 Gunjekar discussed *Gomantaki* as the language of Saraswats, considered it as a form of ancient Saraswati and found it quite similar to the ancient Balabhasha. He mentioned that it was found in its pure form in the speech of Goan Saraswats. (p. 58)

under the control of the Church and had been alienated from anything Indian or Hindu in their public formal life though they had retained many traits of their ancestors' culture prior to their christianisation. The general consensus among Hindus was that they belonged to Maharashtra through Marathi. This was against the Church policy of holding Goans or 'Portuguese Indians' together, saving them from the undesirable influence of Marathi which taught anti-Portuguese ideas. A section of the Catholic elite in Goa stood for the Portuguese Goa and looked down upon every thing Indian. Their interests lay in getting some form of autonomy while a few among them were led to believe that the Portuguese would clinch back the power from India. Many among the Hindu elites were aware of the changes taking place in Maharashtra and were not willing to lose their traditional hold on society. It was a coalition of Catholics as a whole together with a section of upper caste Hindus that combined to 'save' Goa from the 'merger' that the Goan Hindu masses, oriented by Hindu intellectuals, had planned for.

In addition to this community aspect, there also developed a caste contest in liberated Goa. The Hindu masses in Goa looked at the local Saraswats as usurpers, exploiters and opportunists (Chopadekar in Dudh Sagar, Diwali 1968: 85). The awareness and mobilisation of depressed sections like Devadasis or Kalavants had taken place since the beginning of the twentieth century and Saraswats as a community had looked at this development with apprehension (Radhakrishna, 1999: 24), though some of its members had supported the progressive movement. The attempts of Devadasis to be freed from the bad practices involving prostitution in the name of bonded service to temples and temple authorities had been foiled by the Saraswats and their *Swami* (Painginkar,

1969). Some educated and progressive minded individuals in the Devadasi community had managed to get the Portuguese government to ban the practices like *Shens* by law in 1930 (Painginkar, 1969) and their efforts to educate the community members - especially the female members - had made certain orthodox sections among the Saraswats uncomfortable. In case of Vaishyas the age-old rivalry in economic field and also that in relation to socio-cultural issues like the temple control (Verekar, 1937 quoted in Gomantak 3.10.1982)<sup>45</sup> served as the basis of their opinion of the Saraswats. All these castes looked at Saraswats as usurpers, exploiters and opportunists. As liberation provided opportunity for political mobilisation all these forces had to unite under the banner of *Bahujan Samaj*- the term hitherto unknown to Goans. It was the Saraswat domination of the Pradesh Congress which culminated in the rejection of the electoral candidature claim of Dayanand Bandodkar, a true Congressman, that led to the consolidation of this combine in the new name of Maharashtra import i.e. *Bahujan Samaj* (meaning the mass community). This *Bahujan Samaj* was to become the backbone of the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party for the next decade and a half under the charismatic leadership of the same man - Dayanand Bandodkar or *Bhau* to masses - a member of the Devadasi community. The caste axis of Goan politics was partly a product of the changed face of Congress politics in Maharashtra during the course of the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement of the 1950's. Later developments in Goa strengthened the anti-Saraswat campaign

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<sup>45</sup> . Narayan Dattatray Verekar of Calangute published a booklet '*Os Chardos sao Studros?*' in reply to an article by Panduronga S. Pissurlencar on the Hindu members of Chardo caste' in which there were observations regarding the hegemony of Saraswats in control of Hindu temples. N. Shivdas published a summary of the preface to this booklet in his article published in the midst of Nakul Gurav dispute.

especially through the Marathi Press reaction to the Pradesh Congress decisions and actions.

### **Inter-Language Scenario**

Along with the social basis of language dynamics there was the issue of relationship of Konkani with other regional languages, which accounted for the mobilisation of the Konkani forces. The Konkani speaking people had settled in the four language areas viz. Marathi in the north Konkan and Bombay, Kannada in North Kanara, Tulu in South Kanara and Malayalam in Kerala.

The common view of these different language groups was that Konkani was not a language because it had no script of its own and had no literature. In the Konkan region under Bombay state there was spread of Marathi as language of education and culture, official and social communication and the local varieties were considered as dialects, sometimes in the common denomination of Konkani after the region of Konkan. In fact, the process of Marathiisation of Konkani areas was noted with a sense of appreciation in the Marathi literary circles (Komarpant, 1992). Enrichment of Marathi literature by the Konkani speaking writers<sup>46</sup> was viewed as natural and commendable.

Kannada was accepted by the Konkani speakers who settled in the erstwhile Mysore state. But Konkani caste groups were described as '*Konkane*' and did not have the social recognition on par with their local counterparts. The

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<sup>46</sup> . Many writers from Konkan were recognised as Marathi literateurs on the basis of their creative output. C.T.Khanolkar, Madhu Mangesh Karnik, Jayawant Dalvi belonged to Konkan and Subhash Bhende, Mahadev Shastri Joshi, B. D. Satoskar and many other Goans identified with Marathi. In liberated Goa most of the Konkani writers had begun their writing in Marathi and later shifted to Konkani. B. B. Borkar and Lakshmanrao Sardesai had got recognition in Marathi literary world but were later sidelined because of their close association with Konkani.

Kannada Brahmins did not consider the Konkani Brahmins as equals and pointed to their diet as a mark of their lower and impure status (Interview – Prof. Tantri, K.N.Rao). Their language was looked down upon. As Konkani speakers got educated in Kannada and some of them started writing in that language they had to get themselves Kannada sounding names to avoid neglect, hatred and despise<sup>47</sup>. With little written literature in Konkani from the Hindu side, the language was never given any importance by the Kannada speakers among Hindus. With large scale migration of Konkani speaking Hindus of North Kanara to the metropolis of Bombay over a century (1860s to 1960s), the vigorous campaign by Karnataka government for implementation of Kannada as Official Language after 1970s and expansion of Kannada medium in place of Marathi for school education in the disputed areas since 1980s, Konkani was pushed out of use.

Tulu land was occupied by the Konkani speakers on their migration from Goa and the upper caste Hindus, especially GSBs took to trade while the Catholics were mostly agriculturists. During the British rule the latter found government employment and were also given large tracts of land that remained unclaimed after the British war against Tipu which claimed thousands of lives (Interview – Dr. K.Mohan Pai). The trading Konkani Brahmins had major interests in the market and they used Tulu in their business. Catholics, as a religious minority, on the other hand, kept Konkani in use in religion and worship, while opening educational institutions for English and Kannada education. There was little consciousness about their language among Tulu speakers and there were

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<sup>47</sup> . K.N.Rao who has written in Kannada and Konkani said that his original name Narasinha Kamath did not find favour with the editors of Kannada periodicals and the same writings were published when sent in the name of K. N. Rao, because of the familiar Kannada surname Rao.

no efforts to create literature in Tulu till very recently (Interview – Eric Ozario). Konkani as a socio-cultural medium in public sphere remained restricted to Catholics since GSBs claimed it as their language but did not work specifically for it. Their major activities went on in Kannada or Tulu. Some prominent GSB Konkani speakers patronised Tulu when their efforts to develop Konkani language were stalled by the Catholic church authorities in a bid to corner the credit for the historic work of a lexicon for Konkani (Interview – Eric Ozario, see footnote 39).

Relationship between Malayalam and Konkani is not quite clear, because Konkani language community is quite small in the Malayalam area and general impression about Konkani is that of a speech without script and literature. The Konkani language community there being rigidly caste-ridden, its image is not very positive and with little literature of prestige produced locally there is not much interaction between literary and creative areas of the two. The sense of inferiority among the small Konkani language community is reinforced by the linguistic fanaticism of Malayalam. Konkani speakers have contributed to Malayalam language and literature in the past; in the strong literary and cultural environment of Malayalam, Konkani remains low-key also due to its inherent social deficiencies.

In the entire Konkan *kshetra*, the four language areas of Marathi, Kannada, Tulu and Malayalam contained a number of pockets occupied by the Konkani speakers whose search for identity through language remained a distant dream till the liberation of Goa in December 1961. With little knowledge about Goa especially in the southern areas on the coast, Konkani speakers' sense of

community was shaped by the local variants of caste and culture. It was only after the Goa liberation that the contest for the identity came into the open in the form of political process in the course of integration of the territory in the Indian Union.

### GOA - KONKANI LANGUAGE MOVEMENT

The process of mobilisation for Konkani was strengthened in the metropolitan settings of Bombay mainly under the leadership of Goan intellectuals<sup>48</sup>. Through their addresses and deliberations or resolutions in the Konkani Parishad they demanded the place for Konkani within the Goan administration and education (*Jaag*, Aug.1993). It was also said that, with liberation, Konkani would find its rightful place. Involvement of Goan youth in literary activities and their association with the liberation struggle prepared the ground for the movement that was later seen in Goa.

Liberation of Goa raised the issue of its political and administrative future in the Indian Union. Many among the nationalists, being of the opinion that Goa belonged to Maharashtra, expected immediate integration. But the Goans who descended from Bombay soon after liberation had the experience of cosmopolitan contestation for identity and exposure to the movement of '*Samyukta Maharashtra*' for Marathi state. The sense of anxiety and uncertainty among Goan Catholics (especially the clergy and the elites among them), which followed the 'shocking' 'annexation by conquest' led to their political vulnerability, which prepared the ground for a movement for a separate Goa. The changing face of

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<sup>48</sup>. After Shennai Goembab, the work was carried further by Bakibab Borkar, Ravindra Kelekar, Manohar Rai Sardessai, Vaman Sardessai. Prof. Mariano Saldanha contributed through his research, George Moraes was another academician actively involved with the work through his Konkani Institute of Arts and Science.

Congress politics in the neighbouring Maharashtra was also instrumental in shaping the movement. As a result of all these factors, the Konkani language movement had its beginnings in Goa. The language movement in Goa was conducted broadly in four phases :

- ( i ) Autonomy and the Opinion Poll – 1962 – 1967,
- ( ii ) Education and Literary Status – 1967 – 1975,
- ( iii ) Official Language Status and statehood – 1985 – 1987, and
- ( iv ) Medium of Instruction Issue - 1991 – 1992.

### **Autonomy and the Opinion Poll**

At the time of liberation the ideas about the political future of Goa were diverse. They were based on religious, socio-cultural and economic aspects of Goan public life. Catholics by and large were uncertain about the prospects in the new democratic set up with certain advantages to Hindu majority. The linking of Goa and Maharashtra on the basis of language was viewed with concern by those who believed in the separate identity of Goa. The Congress politics in Maharashtra had thrown up the leadership from the non-Brahmin sections and Goa's merger would bring up similar situation depriving the traditional political elites among Goan Hindus of their position. Also the land reforms proposed in that state were a matter of worry for the Goan 'Bhatkar' section. The assurances in the past from the Prime Minister Pandit Nehru of 'an autonomous administrative existence' (Cruz, 1974: 274) were a ray of hope for those who feared being swept away by the sheer numbers in the event of merger with Maharashtra. The Socialist-led National Congress Goa under the leadership of

Peter Alvares was for immediate merger which the upper caste Goan leadership in the Congress found undesirable. All these factors led to the Movement that ensured separate political identity of Goa.

The earliest attempt to demand autonomy and statehood for Goa came in the political conference (the first in liberated Goa) at Margao in early 1962 presided over by the nationalist Dr. Antonio Furtado. The issues like small size, lack of experience, non-viability were raised by the mergerists (Karmali in *Shankar*, 1988: 29). The conference was partly successful in creating consciousness about the need for autonomy. But the future developments like the *Marathi Sahitya Sammelan* and *Konkani Parishad* held in the same year brought the issue of language to centrestage. In the next five years language occupied an important position in the debates on the political status of Goa. With the first Marathi daily (Daily *Gomantak* started by the industrial family of Chowgules) siding with Marathi and merger of Goa with Maharashtra, the Konkani side felt the need to counter the propaganda and started daily 'Rashtramat' in September 1963 for three main objectives – ( i ) statehood for Goa, ( ii ) opposition to merger with Maharashtra and ( iii ) independent language status for Konkani language of Goa. The financing of this venture was done by the two local Saraswat mine owners Timblo, Salgaonkar and a Gujarati co-businessman Shantilal Khushaldas.

On political front the caste equations were fundamental to the process of party formation and the two regional parties reflected the clear caste-language combine. MGP had the support of the local business caste of Vaishyas and all other non-Brahmin castes bracketed under the Bahujan Samaj with their traditional loyalty to Marathi whereas the UGP was supported by Goan Catholics

and Hindu Saraswats with their commitment to Konkani. The first three years after the liberation under the elected MGP government were full of political mobilisation by the UGP on the issues related to administrative and political status of the territory, including the language issue. This was supplemented by the pressure building tactics of the Saraswat-led Congress through agitations and campaigns in the name of development, autonomy and culture. These together culminated in the Congress decision of holding an 'Opinion Poll' in Goa. The 1967 Poll removed the immediate threat of merger.

In the course of this political battle language gained significance. *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* formed in 1962 promoted primary education in Konkani by supporting the existing schools and starting one of its own in Margao. The response to these schools was seen rising during the years preceding the Opinion Poll. Between 1963 and 1965, the enrolment in Konkani medium primary schools increased from 2161 to 5551 (Satoskar, 1970), which was less than 3 % and 7 % respectively of the total student population in Goa at that stage in the two years. There were also attempts to introduce Konkani as a third language in the secondary schools.

The major thrust of this phase was the creation of political opinion favouring Konkani as the regional identity encompassing communities. The local Congress leadership comprising mainly of Saraswats provided the essential arguments for demanding statehood and stalling every attempt of merger. With Congress government and leadership in Maharashtra awaiting merger, the High Command was under pressure to settle the issue. It was Pandit Nehru's idea of 'individuality and personality of Goa' that helped the Goan leaders to demand

'Opinion Poll' on the issue after Nehru's demise. The real threat was the presence of Y. B. Chavan who occupied a responsible position at the centre. To overcome the uncertainty and to ward off the danger of 'dissolution' of Goa into Maharashtra the Opinion Poll was accepted. The issues of merger and Marathi were propagated on the one side in a tension-filled campaign by the politicians, journalists, writers and cultural artists from both Maharashtra and Goa, whereas on the other side, the Konkani side, the campaign depended on the local Catholic theatre form of *Tiatr* and the support of the Congress ruling at the centre. The choice being restricted to merger with Maharashtra or the maintenance of Union Territory status, the educated voters were influenced by presenting the comparative picture in terms of pecuniary benefits, administrative advantages and political status. Economic benefits in the form of better pay scales and political advantages in terms of local decision making were presented as the gifts of the status quo. These were highlighted to convince the immigrant working population (especially teachers hailing from outside Goa whose influence in the areas having illiterate, politically inexperienced population was quite significant) to oppose merger. Locals with the newfound freedom were roped in to side with the anti-mergerists through the interpretation of merger as cultural colonialism. The language and culture figured prominently in this neck to neck contest that mergerists had already considered as a guaranteed win. But with economics and politics weighing more than history and culture, the opinion swung in favour of the status quo.

### **Educational And Literary Status**

The use of Konkani as a household language, as a medium of social communication including public speech was acceptable to those who believed that Marathi was the language of Goa. The distinction between the spoken and the written was used to deny the language status to Konkani, which, for them, was a dialect of Marathi. The controversy over the language–dialect issue was academically addressed by the work of S.M.Katre<sup>49</sup> but the political debate continued as Marathi has been in use in religious and administrative spheres in addition to education. Konkani forces having managed to keep merger at bay, had to think of making the language a literary vehicle. It was admitted that the language had very limited number of books and most of them were for religious use of the Catholics in their daily worship. There were exercises in compiling bibliography and anthology to project the strength of Konkani, which showed that the number of Konkani books in Roman and Kannada scripts were larger than those in Devanagari (Kelekar, 1960) which was always mentioned as the natural script of Konkani. In Goa Konkani had a Roman script tradition of literary output starting from the last decade of the nineteenth century but the protagonists of ‘modern’ Konkani spoke of Devanagari and wanted to develop literature in that script. The ‘emergence of new Goa from the old one’<sup>50</sup> was to be penned through this script.

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<sup>49</sup> . His ‘**Formation of Konkani**’ (1946) is considered as an authoritative linguistic treatise in the language debate though later works e.g. the one of Prabhudesai (in early 1960s) under the guidance of A.K.Priolkar call Konkani a dialect.

<sup>50</sup> . In his writings in the short-lived quarterly ‘*Navem Goem*’ published from Bombay in 1937, Shennai Goembab had spoken about the ‘New Goa’ that was to reflect the ‘Old (Ancient and glorious) Goa’ he had depicted in his research writings on the issues of language and migration in the earlier decade.

Use of daily *Rashtrammat* to encourage the newly educated non-Brahmin sections of Goans to write in Konkani marks this phase of language movement in Goa. The Marathi language Daily, after its role in the Opinion Poll worked to attract the youth towards Konkani. Its annual short story competition has brought into Konkani at least three top-ranking Konkani literateurs of today<sup>51</sup>. Another medium of greater reach was the Panaji station of All India Radio. The influence of the poets Bakibab Borkar and Nagesh Karmali is acknowledged by everyone locally involved in the movement. These two instruments of creative expression have contributed immensely to this phase of literary consolidation in the Konkani movement.

All the efforts of the Konkani movement leaders were directed towards constitutional status to the language as can be seen from the demands and resolutions in the successive Parishads after 1962. The *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* in Goa was now functioning as the representative body as most of the active Goan workers of Konkani had returned to Goa from Bombay, after liberation. The Mandal kept on trying to convince the government about the need to introduce Konkani in education but nothing changed. The enrolment in primary schools in Konkani medium had fallen (from 5551 in 64-65 to 3256 in 68-69) in the years following the Opinion Poll (Satoskar, 1970: ). MGP rule continued uninterrupted but the mergerists had started protesting against Bandodkar's leadership (Fernandes, 1997: 39-45) and masses had sensed the need to opt for English in

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<sup>51</sup> . Mr. Pundalik Narayan Naik, the ex-Vice President and now the President of Goa Konkani Akademi, Mr. Mahabaleshwar Sail and Mr. Damodar Mauzo, the President of *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* (2000-2002) began with Marathi writing and were brought into Konkani mainly through their association with daily *Rashtrammat*. Most of those who were active on the Konkani scene in Goa in the last three decades of the twentieth century have started their literary apprenticeship through '*Rashtrammat*', especially its weekly Konkani supplement '*Somar*'.

education (*Sagar*, Diwali 1969). In this situation scope for Konkani in education ought to be limited to that of an optional language in the Three language Formula. In another development related to language situation at national level, the position of English was confirmed by the Amendment thereby reducing the potential monopoly of Hindi as the Official Language. This was seen as a positive development by the Catholics for whom Konkani in Devanagari was offered as a means to facilitate their adoption of Hindi.

The Parishad as a voice of all Konkani people also became weak after the success of Konkani in the Opinion Poll. The ninth Parishad was held in Bombay in 1967 to coincide with the silver jubilee celebrations of the Bhasha Mandal there. The period between the Opinion Poll and the tenth *Parishad* in Goa was seven years during which the literary side was sought to be organised through *Lekhak Sammelan* (writers' conference) started in Margao in 1968. It was limited to Goans initially and most of the delegates who attended were those writing in Devanagari. The second Sammelan was held in Panaji in 1969. While the language activities through *Parishad* and *Mandal* continued, the stress on Devanagari in education paved way for the popularisation of the Hindu elite variety of Konkani for use by those learning Konkani. On the other hand, the consistent creative efforts in the Roman script produced a large volume of literature, which was losing its readership due to ever growing number of English educated youth preferring English. In the early years of liberation language politics was clearly visible but within that were laid the roots of the politics of script that surfaced little later.

Once the danger of merger with Maharashtra was averted Konkani forces remained dormant in the fields like education. Only few periodicals were started but could not survive for long and even during the short life spans they remained at the level of amateur efforts rather than professional ones. With scanty readership their publication was always non-sustainable. A few of them were annual numbers on the lines of Diwali special issues of Marathi periodicals. Language in education received attention of the political leaders especially those from the Bahujan Samaj, who found no opportunities for their children through Marathi (*Sagar* Diwali 969). English medium schools were opened in increasing numbers and Konkani was sought to be introduced as one of the languages to be studied as an option for Marathi.

The important step taken by the Konkani protagonists in this period was the attempt to seek recognition to their language from the central Sahitya Akademi as a modern Indian literary language. As a part of that exercise regular professional publishing activity was started in the form of *Jaag Prakashan* in Priol in 1970 (Jorge, 1975). The issue of the Sahitya Akademi recognition became very sensitive with opposition from the Marathi language representatives in the Akademi and hostile approach of the local rulers. However, the recognition was managed through the good offices of Dr. Sunitikumar Chatterji (1890-1977) who was the President of the Akademi. As there was no Konkani speaking person in the bodies of the Akademi there was no one to convince the members about the Konkani case. The Akademi General Council consisted of the academics, language representatives, state nominees whose support could be secured through some contact persons. The then Congress MP from Goa Mr. Purushottam

Kakodkar was instrumental in arranging for the support. Mr. Ravindra Kelekar and Mr. Uday Bhembre were the main lobbyists and Dr. Chatterji himself was totally for the recognition and had almost promised it in his address to the tenth *Konkani Parishad* in Panaji in 1974 (Inaugural Address, 1974)<sup>52</sup>. In the first attempt in 1974 the recognition was postponed and in the next annual meeting of the General Council in 1975 the request for recognition was considered favorably mainly due to the forceful plea of the Akademi President Dr. Chatterji (Bapat in Daily *Navashakti* (Marathi) dtd. 14.09.1975) based on his sympathetic view (Rao, 1985: 62). With this the debate on the status of Konkani – whether it was a language or a dialect - was expected to be over. In the opinion of Konkani language leaders ‘the controversy has become a part of history’. But the Marathi side in Goa formed a *Gomantak Marathi Bhasha Parishad* to carry on the struggle to save Marathi as they felt that the recognition to Konkani was the major attack on the Goan Marathi identity of the masses. To them, Konkani was a political weapon of vested interests and a plot to kill Marathi (*Gomantakachi Asmita*, August 1999). They had their moves to seek justice from the government authorities, the first among them being All India Radio, where Marathi was neglected according to them. Although the Marathi lovers mobilised public opinion and built some pressure on the government the strategic gain of Konkani could not be undone.

As a part of its activities Kala Academy of Goa started the annual *Tiatr* festival in 1974 which was followed by the Konkani Drama Festival in 1976. The

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<sup>52</sup> . Dr. Chatterji in his address said, “Konkani ...should be recognised as one of the major languages of India” and also that it was “receiving sympathetic consideration”.

annual Marathi Drama festival had started soon after liberation under *Gomantak Sahitya Sevak Mandal* and was later taken over by Natya Academy which was later converted into Kala Academy. Theatre in Konkani in Goa was the domain of the Catholics till then. There were hardly any stage plays in Konkani among Hindus. But with the coming of youth from the *Bahujan Samaj* into Konkani literary activities as a result of the media influence (mainly All India Radio and daily *Rashtramat*), the literature was freed from the control and dominance of the middle class and from its Saraswat image. Till then the writing in Konkani revolved around the issues and dreams of the middle class or family matters in the upper caste Saraswats. The publishing activity was controlled by the GSBs. But with the coming of a writer such as Pundalik Naik, the literary output changed in approach and quality alike. Themes reflecting the sufferings, concerns, dreams and aspirations of the working class were introduced, as a result of which the rural youth educated in Marathi and thereby close to Devanagari started relating themselves to Konkani. The tenants, farm labourers, fishermen who had never found a place as a part of the Goan community in the Goan writings in Devanagari (both Marathi and Konkani) became the prominent characters in most of the creative works by the young writers from the masses. Konkani literature became a vehicle for the voices unheard so far. It thus began to address the issues and concerns of the toiling masses.

With the Drama festival in Konkani the leaders of the movement could use this new force to establish this popular medium in the language, making the use of the experience of the traditional Marathi stage patronised by Hindu Goans. While the spread of English education had an adverse impact on the popular Konkani

theatre of Goan catholics, in terms of an extensive audience, in contrast the Hindu Konkani created a space for itself in the field through the Kala Academy Festival.

### **Official Language Agitation**

On the basis of the Sahitya Akademi recognition Konkani could now answer the common charge of being a ‘dialect’. The publishing activities got a boost mainly in Devanagari script with the newly acquired ‘official recognition to the literary status’ by ‘the highest court of languages’ in the country. Konkani writers as a whole looked at the recognition as a historic achievement. Konkani also found its place in education as an optional language in the curriculum of the newly set up Goa, Daman and Diu Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education. But in all these avenues opened for Konkani the benefits hinged on the element of script, as Devanagari was ‘officially’ accepted as the script for Konkani. Roman script users had to work for themselves outside the ‘official’ framework.

The attempts to run daily and weekly papers in the Roman script had a mixed success in the past. A few publications that survived over the decades were the ones coming from the Diocese, religious societies of the Goan catholics or some priests among them. Many had tried the combinations of Konkani–English, Konkani-Portuguese, Konkani-English-Portuguese etc. In the early years of liberation Felicio Cardoso had tried to publish two papers on his own, free from the church influence, but had to close down. Gomantak Publications published daily *Uzvadd* from Panaji under the editorship of Evagrio Jorge for the Goan Catholic readership. It could not continue beyond five years. The efforts of Jorge to run his own publication (*Novo Uzvadd*) did not go much further. After the

closure of this last one, a Roman Konkani weekly '*Goencho Mog*' was started from Margao in 1977 by Gurnath Kelekar, a GSB, a writer and protagonist of Devanagari, who had his own printing press and a publishing house for Devanagari books. His new venture in Roman script became popular among Goan Catholics in Goa, Bombay and also in the Middle East. By 1980, there was a proposal to start two Konkani dailies in two scripts – Roman and Devanagari - under a common management. *Novem Goem Pratishtan* was established as a Trust under the leadership of the popular catholic politician Froilano Machado and another lover of Konkani, Dr. F.M. Rebello, a renowned physician from Margao. A rally was planned to go around Goa to collect people's contribution to this proposed enterprise in people's language. Mr. Kelekar was in the forefront of this task of creating awareness of Konkani and mobilising support for the proposed Konkani dailies in both the scripts – Roman and Nagari. Many others from the Devanagari camp were skeptical about it and tried to discourage Mr. Kelekar (Interview- Gurnath Kelekar). But the rally was completed and the Trust project took off. The *Romi* edition was started in 1981 but survived for a short time whereas Nagari edition did not take off.

### **Political Factors**

In the years following the Sahitya Akademi recognition to Konkani, the political situation in Goa became quite unstable in the last tenure of the MGP rule before the imposition of the President's Rule in 1979. Not much was expected

from the local government which had tried, although unsuccessfully, to prevent the Sahitya Akademi from giving recognition to Konkani<sup>53</sup>.

For Konkani leaders the end of the MGP rule was a positive sign and they looked forward to the coming of a pro-Konkani government to power. At the end of nine months of central rule the Union Territory came under the rule of the Congress through the Congress-U victory that saw the return of the MGP dissidents and some ex-UGP elements to power. Though the architect of the formation, the ex-UGP leader Babu Naik, a Saraswat and the Congress leader Dr. Wilfred de Souza, a Catholic – both strong supporters of Konkani - were the real claimants to the post of the CM they had to offer the chair to the Maratha candidate and the MGP dissident Pratapsingh Rane. While both Naik and de Souza were the known pro-Konkani politicians, Rane was fully a pro-Marathi CM. For Konkani language leaders it was the time full of hope as the Congress had promised in its election manifesto to get Konkani included in the eighth schedule of the Indian constitution and also to work for statehood. As both the pro-Konkani stalwarts remained out of the cabinet, Konkani language leaders could use the time only to remind the government of its promises. Rane was invited to address the *Konkani Parishad* session in Bombay in 1980 and the influence of Babu Naik was expected to work in making Rane commit to Konkani.

The first tenure of Rane government was full of bickerings and internal dissidence which the CM thought it wise to overlook and as far as possible

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<sup>53</sup> . Mrs. Shashikala Kakodkar, the then CM is said to have written a letter to Sahitya Akademi saying that 'recognition to Konkani would cause bloodshed in Goa'. Maharashtrian members of the Central cabinet were also approached to stall the decision favourable to Konkani. (Bapat, 1975).

avoided facing the same himself, running to the High Command with complaints of all sorts (Fernandes, 1997). He did not think that the issue of Konkani deserved any serious attention. He had strong support of the New Conquest legislators many of whom were the ex-MGP pro-Marathi elements. The hopes of Konkani language leaders from the Congress were belied and they started thinking of having a more pro-Konkani government on the basis of their earlier proposals (*Jaag*, Republic day special 1977). In their opinion it was Babu Naik who was expected to use the Government for Konkani. But nothing much was achieved during the period, even after his entry to the cabinet in 1983, except the resolution in a party meeting to form Konkani Akademi. Having found Babu Naik not of much use for the cause of Konkani, these leaders (Ravindra Kelekar, Manohar SarDessai, Uday Bhembre, Gurunath Kelekar and many others who were active in the organisational matters) had to find other ways to make things happen as they desired.

As a result of groupism and dissensions the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) President was changed twice by the Congress High Command in the later part of the first tenure of Rane ministry. The elections in 1984 were seen as crucial by the Konkani language leaders to press their demands such as the Official Language status to Konkani and its constitutional recognition (inclusion in the schedule of the recognised languages of India i.e., VIII schedule of the constitution). Congress had enjoyed power but Konkani was not attended to in the first tenure. This time they had to make sure that Konkani was not overlooked. They found the opportunity in the candidature of Uday Bhembre as an independent candidate supported by all the non-Congress forces including the

MGP against Babu Naik from the Margao assembly constituency in 1984 elections. With Bhembre's electoral victory the hopes were raised. Another positive factor was that the PCC President during this time was Smt. Sulochana Katkar, a staunch follower of Purushottm Kakodkar, the senior Congressman who had been close to the Nehru family. Both the parliamentary seats for Goa were with the Congress. Also Goa Congress formed by a break-away group of Congress under Dr. Wilfred de Souza was a pro-Konkani force that was considered a favourable factor. With all these it was considered the appropriate time for a major move for Konkani.

In the new Congress government Rane as the leader of the legislative wing had become more confident and assertive. His stand on the language issue remained the same though as a part of the party propaganda he spoke of support to Konkani. His stand on language was put to test when a private member's bill to make Konkani the Official language of the territory came before the House. His remarks against the language<sup>54</sup> more than the rejection of the Bill itself were primarily responsible for the later mobilisation of the Konkani forces with the initiative of writers and artists.

### **Language Agitation**

The CLP resolution of 10<sup>th</sup> September 1985 in favour of Konkani as the Official Language was the beginning of the over 18 months long agitation that made Konkani the Official Language of Goa and finally brought statchood to Goa on the basis of language. The strategy was planned entirely under the leadership

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<sup>54</sup> . CM advised the Goa Congress MLA to learn and improve his Konkani and arrange to produce literature in the language before asking for status.

and guidance of the Saraswats among the Konkani stalwarts, although the agitation was projected as that of the Goan masses. The issues of leadership, nature of organisation and agenda were addressed in the small circle of writers and artists. It was decided to give the leadership to the *Bahujan Samaj* and the choice fell on Pundalik Naik who had epitomised the creative potential of the masses and inspired loyalty to Konkani among Goan Hindu youth mainly from the masses. His handling of the number of literary forms in Konkani had brought laurels to the language at national and also international levels and given a sense of new era to local Konkani literateurs. The non-partisan political image of the man was essential to draw the sections of youth among the masses who had started getting disillusioned with the policies and programmes of government.

The formation of the *Konkani Porzecho Avaz* (Voice of Konkani People - henceforth KPA) was essentially to pressurize the government to act on the promises given by the Congress in its election manifesto. The Official Language agitation was carried on through mobilisation of people with the help of the local cultural groups in the Hindu dominated areas and the active involvement of the Church to ensure major Catholic presence for show of strength. The three demands viz. Official Language status to Konkani, Statehood for Goa and inclusion of Konkani in the eighth schedule were in fact built around the single issue of language.

KPA was not given the shape of a statutory registered organisation but was allowed to grow as a public agitation. The planning was worked out in a small group dominated by the Saraswats with its enforcement left to the numerically strong non-Saraswat sections led by the young *Bahujan Samaj* leader

along with the Church-supported Catholic masses. The composition of the Council kept the politicians out to give the group an image of non-party popular exercise. Politicians figured in the movement only at the time of open confrontation and ultimatum at the mega rally in Panaji on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1985. In their bid to get the objectives of the KPA fulfilled the Konkani language leaders repeated the formula of the Opinion Poll by holding public meetings to convince the people of the significance of a language based state. The major demand was the Official Language status exclusively to Konkani as against the hitherto practised use of Marathi in official and administrative matters. The Congress legislators were divided on the issue but the pro-Marathi members being in a minority in the House, it was felt that the demand for 'Konkani Alone' could be attained under the Congress government. With the rise of KPA in the first three months of its formation the Marathi organisations mobilised public opinion to demand equal status for Marathi, which implied that the territory of Goa, Daman and Diu would be tri-lingual with Konkani, Marathi for Goa and Gujarati for the other two districts of Daman and Diu. In the statehood terms, Goa would still be a bi-lingual state, which, according to Konkani side, was a risky proposition due to the possibility of re-emergence of the merger demand and also because it would deprive Goans of their opportunities in the face of 'outsiders' who would find access in jobs and administration through Marathi (KPA, 1986).

Congress leadership was also divided on the language issue as they had been before. The Legislature party leader i.e., CM Mr. Rane was pro-Marathi whereas the organisational chief Smt. Katkar was pro-Konkani. Rane used his weight to get the representative democratic institutions and the local self-

government bodies to pass resolutions favouring Marathi to counter the Konkani attack. There were rallies, demonstrations, delegations and discussions at all levels of the territory. The central leadership was approached by both the sides. Konkani side used the policy decisions, resolutions and manifesto to press the demand whereas tradition, popular practices and ‘principle of justice’<sup>55</sup> were invoked by those demanding Marathi.. The major shift was in the relative emphasis – while in the earlier phase Marathi was in commanding position, now it was pushed to the wall and made to seek parity as a compromise.

The constitutional privileges and economic benefits of Konkani were stressed by the KPA through its meetings in towns and villages, while Marathi side insisted on traditional use of Marathi in all the spheres of Goan life and government, pleading for the rightful place to Marathi as the Official Language along with Konkani. The Konkani side projected the language as the cementing factor that held together all the communities in Goa, stressed the status of Konkani as equal to any other Indian language, consequent upon its recognition by the central Sahitya Akademi, and emphasised its importance in democratic participation of people in administration and law. Also they made a case against Marathi saying that it was being used for arousing communal sentiments and also that allowing it a place would open the doors for thousands of jobseekers from

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<sup>55</sup> . The Marathi protagonists were of the opinion that the very fact of Marathi being in use in all the domains of public life, cultural and social activities of the majority of Goans (Hindus) was a proof enough to grant it the status of Official Language along with Konkani. To ignore the large readership of Marathi newspapers and periodicals, also regular publication of Marathi books and periodicals in Goa, the role of Marathi in primary education would amount to total injustice, according to them.

Maharashtra, depriving the locals of employment opportunities. The argument that Marathi had a state of its own in Maharashtra but Konkani had none was quite common.

Marathi side, on the other hand, spoke of the popular use of that language in all spheres of Goan life, its recognition and appreciation by the Roman Catholic priests in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Konkani as a recent development and inadequate means of public or official communication, lacking any standard and support in public or administrative sphere. Konkani was seen as a dialect unable to handle the complex and multifarious functions of a language in modern context. It was also projected as a ploy of appeasement of minority by the vested interests.

In the whole movement on Official Language issue, the Konkani side depended heavily on the church authorities for support from the Catholics and a section of youth from the Hindu masses to demonstrate people's strength. Marathi side, on the other hand, had traditional support-base of cultural groups and organisations, sympathy of majority of Hindu legislators mainly from the New Conquests, a large number of local self-government bodies in most talukas. Konkani claimed the sole Official language status whereas Marathi was seeking a share in the arrangement. Though the numbers on both sides could balance, Konkani side had an advantage of the skills unique to its traditional leadership, primarily the GSBs.

### Role of the Saraswats

The 555 days Official Language agitation saw Goans resorting to violence in the name of language. The issues of linguistic identity and communal animosity were debated with frenzy. The voice of youth from the Hindu masses was louder this time but the crucial decisions were taken by the nucleus made up of the Saraswats. Though the KPA convenor was made the final authority on the actions and decisions in official terms, the contents and details were worked out through the advice of the think-tank which was predominantly made up of Saraswats. It was their skill of diplomacy and sense of political accuracy that made a difference. They made use of growing frustration among educated youth, internal bickerings of the local ruling party, feeling of uncertainty and insecurity in the minority, and the favourable political situation at the centre to get the long pending demand fulfilled.

The choice of leader, name and nature of the organisation and the basic arguments for the agitation were provided by Ravindra Kelekar, the Saraswat leader who was in the forefront of the Konkani language movement in Goa from the day of liberation of the territory. The functioning and policy-making of the KPA was guided and monitored constantly by another Saraswat, Uday Bhembre who was identified with the '*Brahmastra*'<sup>56</sup> of the Opinion Poll period. Others

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<sup>56</sup> . '*Brahmastra*', a popular column (in daily *Rashtramata* of Margao) consisting of comments on the happenings and moves/decisions of leaders/ government in Goa in the period between the liberation and the Opinion Poll, is credited with a major part of opinion-formation in favour of the status quo and known for scathing attack on the idea of merger. *Brahmastra* in mythical context belonged to Lord Parashurama, who is credited with the settlement of the GSBs in Konkani and Goa. Many believe that it was the writing and oratory of Uday Bhembre during the Opinion Poll campaign that converted a large number of youth and wage earners to the supporters of the status quo and against the merger.

such as Damodar Mauzo, Nagesh Karmali, Datta S. Naik were close to the decision makers. Chandrakant Keni, though not a part of the formation, played a very significant role in formulating the arguments in the course of discussions with the central leadership (Interview – Pundalik Naik).

### **Catholic Concerns**

The support and contribution of the Catholics to the Official Language agitation was mainly in the mobilisation of men and money, show of numerical strength. Their concern was essentially emotional rather than practical, because they looked at Konkani as their identity but moved towards English increasingly in all the aspects of personal, socio-cultural and economic life. Their assessment of party positions and share in political institutions was more in terms of religion, which was reflected in their electoral behaviour in the first two decades after liberation. The Catholic political leadership playing the role of the opposition during the MGP rule was now with the Congress and Catholics hoped for a better role for their representatives. Willy-Luizinho's Goa Congress which was born out of their sense of being neglected wanted to get the most out of the Konkani agitation. With the build-up to the Official Language agitation under the eyes of the saraswats, Catholic forces responded to the appeal for the cause of their mother tongue, with the encouragement of their leaders in search of political gains.

## **Bahujan Samaj**

With the crumbling of the MGP the Bahujan Samaj was fragmented in terms of political party representation. Many MGP dissidents had landed in the Congress via the Congress (U). In the new situation they were a party to the Congress manifesto that had promised Konkani its due. The youth who aspired for employment and higher education were becoming aware of the limitations of the Union Territory status and found sense in the demand for statehood. The cultural and literary expansion and strengthening of Konkani through the work of young Konkani writers from the Hindu masses gave added confidence to youth from the Bahujan Samaj. The choice of Pundalik Naik as the convenor of KPA provided opportunity for these youth to assert themselves for a cause of culture that they could claim as theirs. The impact of Marathi had receded in the wake of expansion of English education, which also worked in favour of Konkani, though in a limited way<sup>57</sup>. KPA appeared to be a people's movement led by their own man.

Official Language movement spearheaded by the KPA had managed to pressurize the politicians to come to a compromise in the form of Official Language Act which was passed in the Goa, Daman and Diu Legislative Assembly on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1987 under the whip of the High Command. It provided for the Official Language status to Konkani and equal status to Marathi. Goa became the 25<sup>th</sup> state in May 1987. Two out of the three demands of KPA

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<sup>57</sup> . Education in English medium provided for a choice in third language between Marathi and Konkani. Hindi as the national language remained as the second language in the Three Language Formula. Those who offered Konkani in education were mainly Catholic students in the early years. But being made to learn the language in Devanagari their links with Konkani writings in Roman script were weakened. They took to reading English instead of Konkani. The benefit to Konkani was limited and sectional at best.

were fulfilled and the third – that of inclusion of Konkani in the VIII schedule of the Constitution - was beyond the purview of the local government. The main advantage of the Official Language Act from the point of view of the Saraswat leadership was that it gave primacy to Konkani over Marathi and specified the script of Konkani as Devanagari thereby defining the specific variety of the language as acceptable to and recognised by the state.

### **Medium of Instruction Issue**

With the passage of the Official Language Act followed by the grant of statehood for Goa as the state for Konkani, the language controversy ought to have been settled. But the provisions of the Act raised questions about the nature of 'equal' status to Marathi and instead of removing the debate from the electoral agenda invigorated it in the first elections to the state legislative assembly. Though the elections were held nearly thirty months after the attainment of statehood and almost thirty four months from the day the Official Language Act was passed, the results reflected the public mind in the form of equal number of seats – 18 each - to the pro-Konkani Congress and the pro-Marathi MGP, two independents taking two sides bringing the tally to 19 each. MGP could make a comeback and soon managed to share power with the people who had been active in Konkani agitation. The leaders made claims of ending the language controversy but the language issue, which Konkani leaders considered as already decided and settled premanently, surfaced in a different form in the Progressive Democratic Front (PDF) rule. The Goan Peoples Party (GPP), a component of the PDF, was under pressure to support the agitation for government grants to private primary

schools mainly the English medium ones. In their development agenda the PDF ministry included 'reviewing the contentious issue of grants to private primary schools in order to accommodate all views' as one of the six proposals. (Fernandes, 1997: 121). Also the portfolio of 'Official language' was created out of the General Administration during this time. The Grants issue in a way turned into the language issue as most of those who were fighting for either Konkani or Marathi now joined to oppose government grants to English medium primary schools. Their argument was that primary education was supposed to be in a child's mother-tongue, but English could not be the mother-tongue of Goans. The argument was ideational and ideological but far from realistic. Because over the decade of the Congress rule primary schools in English medium had increased in number as well as in enrolment figures at the cost of government primary schools in Marathi medium. Though the issue had come up in the form of demand in parity of wages to teachers in these English medium primary schools the government was obliged to respond since primary education was the state responsibility. The issue was addressed by asking the primary schools to switch over to any of the Indian languages in order to be eligible for government grants. In the years following the liberation the pro-Konkani sections had been charged with 'double standards' as they sent their wards to English schools. After nearly three decades the English primary education had spread among all sections but the language leaders did not see it as a reality. Under financial compulsions a large number of private primary schools officially changed their medium but in practice they invariably continued their old system of teaching in English. As Konkani medium schools they taught Konkani through English (*Jaag*, Nov.1997: 1). A

bulk of them belonged to the Diocesan Society. The Society, having decided to switch over to Konkani, faced parents' wrath (Interview – Tomazinho Cardoso). There were practical problems too. Teachers in these schools had no training or abilities to teach Konkani in Devanagari script and they interacted with students in English as before. There were protests by parents through their Action Committee on Medium of Education (ACME), against the policy to deny freedom of choice. The question of language in education remained neglected as before though government claimed to have resolved it.

In the debate on medium of education at primary stage the two language groups – Marathi and Konkani – stood united against giving grants to English medium schools (Daily **Gomantak Times** )but the state has the whole of its secondary education and higher education in English and the popular belief is that the use of English from primary stage onwards would solve the problems faced by students at these later stages. English having come to be recognised as the language of mobility and future prospects, parents, irrespective of divisions like rural/ urban, rich/ poor or Hindu/Catholic, seek admissions for their children in English medium schools starting from the nursery stage. But there is no government support and the discriminatory measures like absence of government grants have not discouraged or dissuaded parents in any way. The support to English came from a large section of the same people who had worked to place their Konkani 'mai' on the 'throne' (Newman, 2000). In the emerging global situation Goans wanted to catch up through English while identifying themselves through Konkani. Their experience showed that English provided an advantage in the larger Indian context and was necessary for mobility in search of overseas

opportunities, which was the mainstay of Goans particularly from the Old Conquests.

While the process of defining Konkani as a linguistic identity evolved through the major part of the twentieth century on the west coast of India as a whole, its political benefits were available to a small section of Hindu elites, mainly Goans, whose organisational skills and mediating methods succeeded in getting the actual stake holders in the language to agree to Devanagari script. Though written works of any consequence were not available in Devanagari at the turn of the nineteenth century, the period of around fifty years (1925-1975) was used by a specific group (GSBs) to create a situation favourable to Devanagari, using the performance in other scripts by other regional Konkani groups (Goan and Canara Catholics, some Kanara Saraswats and also GSBs from Kerala) for sustaining the various claims in favour of the language and limiting the benefits to Devanagari (script) in the name of Konkani (language). In this sense, language politics in respect of Konkani was the politics of script writ large.

## CHAPTER III: SCRIPT AS A DRESS CODE

### KONKANI AND ITS SCRIPTS

As seen earlier, the language called Konkani was known to and studied by the early Roman Catholic missionaries during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the first century of the colonial encounter. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century they published some grammars, prepared dictionaries and vocabularies, composed hymns and songs for use in worship by the local converts to christianity. It is accepted even by the Marathi scholars that the name Konkani was given to the speech of South Konkan in ancient times and in the 17<sup>th</sup> century it was known by that name (Kulkarni, 1938: 31). But the language suffered due to the vicissitudes of the colonial policies in that regard. The later lull in the activities was the result of the Decree of the Portuguese Viceroy in 1784, brought about by the internal politics of the religious orders and groups/ classes of clergy (SarDessai, 2000: 14). In the two centuries between the arrival of the Portuguese and the establishment of *Estado da India* the regional politics of Konkan underwent drastic changes.

The emergence and expansion of Maratha power shaped the history of a large part of India between the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Goa as a geographical construct of the present was largely shaped during this period. The Portuguese had sway also over North Konkan till 1739 A.D. (BSK II: 549), while the Maratha power had control over almost the whole of south Konkan except the three islands that comprised the Old Conquests of the Portuguese Goa. The second half of the eighteenth century witnessed the creation of larger Goa through

the addition of the New Conquests. The language and culture of Konkani had witnessed major changes during this whole period of over two centuries.

The British ascendancy in India displaced the Peshwa rule that concluded the Maratha epoch. The issue of Konkani as a language figured in the early years of this transition in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Problems concerning its name and status cropped up in a dispute with regard to the translation of the New Testament called as the *Kunkuna Bible* Vol. V published in 1818 by the Serampore missionaries 'in another dialect of the Marathi language', in use 'in southern Konkani, in the vicinity of Goa' (Pinge, 1960: 61). The Bombay missionaries did not recognise this *kunkuna*, saying that:

'We are prepared to state that from Goa northward through the whole of the Kunkun, the Mahratta language is universally spoken with only a slight provincial variation from the same language as spoken at Poona. From the name of the country this language has been called the Kunkunee language, but it differs in so slight a degree from the Mahratta, that in our judgement of able brahmuns whom we have consulted, a distinct version is neither at all desirable nor justifiable.'

According to these missionaries, the name *Kunkunee* (Konkani) came 'from the name of the country' and the language was not much different from the *Mahratta* (Marathi). Therefore, they opined, 'a distinct version (of the Bible) [sic] is neither at all desirable nor justifiable'. The version, printed in 'the Balbodh character' i.e. Devanagari script, according to Rev. Bruce, is 'much more easily read than the Marathi version, but its idioms are less easily understood'<sup>1</sup>. One can gather that the idioms were not as Marathi as the character in which the work was printed. Also it is easy to understand what makes the work 'undesirable' and 'unjustifiable', if one notes that the 'judgement' was the result of 'consultation' with 'able brahmuns', who, almost certainly, had to be the Marathi Brahmins, for

whom Marathi was the language of the region. The dialect used in the translation was similar to the one current in Mangalore in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which possibly occurred in Goa in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Court Pundits from south Konkan who were consulted, discounted the effort as ‘no language at all’ (Pinge, 1960: 62 quoting *The Oriental Christian Spectator*, July 1836). Serampore missionaries considered this criticism as unfounded and in their bid to counter the attack, solicited a recommendation on the usefulness of the specific version from an officer of the Madras Civil Service. But in this battle, the Konkani Bible was the victim. It failed to gain popularity while the other language editions, particularly Marathi ones, had widespread use in the region.

In this sense, the use of Devanagari script seems to have caused this denial of language status to the Konkani version, because it was seen as Marathi, though till then the script by itself was not called Marathi but *Balbodh* i.e. ‘simple’ or etymologically, easy for children to understand<sup>2</sup>. This script has been acquired by the Hindu masses in Konkan and Goa, the region of ‘Konkani’, through learning of Marathi, which is a phenomenon of the twentieth century (Desai, 1990: 12), though it was in use traditionally only among sections of the upper castes engaged in intellectual/ academic or administrative/ financial matters. In the nineteenth century, the Hindus in Goa had no organised school education system and even in the ‘*shennaimam*’ system discussed in earlier chapter the instructions were provided in four different characters (*Barpam*) rather than specific languages. Even the arithmetical/ numerical operations had their own names different from

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<sup>1</sup>. Memorial Papers of the American Marathi Mission, (1882). p.77: quoted in Pinge, 1960. p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>. Fr. Maffei, in his Konkani Grammar written in the last decades of the nineteenth century distinguishes between *Bal bodh* and *Modi* and names the latter as Mahratti.

the ones used in Marathi education in later years and modified further for Konkani in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Goa<sup>3</sup>. The language that figured in the 'Lalits' (devotional songs and prayers) was Marathi as an element of religious worship. Reading skill was needed to be able to read the 'Rokhe' i.e. money receipts and promissory notes written in *Balbodh* (Devanagari) and *Modi* (the cursive or twisted script, which was then used for Marathi). In short, the three R's had limited relation with a specific language as such. Moreover, all this was the privilege of the male members in the upper caste among Konkani speakers viz. Saraswats, as girls were not usually given all this education. Masses had no formal education at all. Konkani speakers who had migrated further south had already adopted the regional languages there for day-to-day communication and even in their literary expression, as can be seen from some names appearing as the pioneers of those languages<sup>4</sup>. In the north, strong Marathi influence and proximity to Konkani as a language challenged the status of Konkani and affected its effective use.

For Konkani speaking community, the language identity is problematised largely by its multiliteral character. As seen above, the use of Devanagari makes it Marathi, for many. It is on the same count that Konkani was mentioned in the past as having no independent alphabet (The daily *Dnyana Prakash*- 13<sup>th</sup> march 1924 [Chavan, 1995: XVII] ). That Konkani had no alphabet of its own was surprising for many, who considered its written forms (Roman or Nagari) as dressing up

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<sup>3</sup> . For example, addition was then called '*mall*' meaning a garland or chain in common parlance; addition and subtraction together were called as '*terjo*' and the four applications of this latter were taught in respect of four different currencies or mediums of exchange viz. *Asurfi*, *Rupoi*, *Navtank*, and *Garany*. For multiplication and division the numerical tables were taught not only of whole numbers but even fractions.

(“*Advocate Of India*” – 27<sup>th</sup> February 1924 as reproduced in Chavan: XII) Konkani uses five different scripts for writing, as mentioned in the earlier chapters. These five scripts have accompanied the invaders or colonisers from different geographical and cultural regions or have been adopted by those who subjected the language to writing. These scripts are in use for other major languages serving much larger communities and territories. Out of these five, only one – Devanagari - is officially recognised on the basis of its Aryan and Indian character. Of the remaining, two, viz. Kannada and Malayalam are Dravidian and are employed to write the two south Indian languages, while the other two – Roman and Arabic - have their origins outside India, but had their strong presence in cultural, economic, social and political life as shown by the forces of history of the sub-continent.

The earliest use of each of these scripts for writing Konkani is yet to be probed thoroughly. Each of these scripts has some literature in Konkani and often the literary history of Konkani in a particular region is limited to works that are written in the specific regional script. In Kerala the literary history starts with certain *Puranas* in translation and *charitras* in original, manuscripts of which are said to be in the custody of the Konkani Brahmins at Ernakulam<sup>5</sup>; and in secular sphere, the testimonial in Devanagari script by three Konkani Brahmins to *Hortus*

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<sup>4</sup> . Few such names are Sheshagiri Prabhu, grammarian, Hari Sharma and Turavoor Madhava Pai, writers in Malayalam and Manjeshwar Govind Pai, Panje Mangesh Rao, Dinkar Desai for Kannada (Kamath, 1999: 25)

<sup>5</sup> . John Leyden (1775-1811) in his visit to Malabar and Cochin at the turn of the eighteenth century, met some Konkani Brahmins, who showed him ‘Bhagavatam, Linga Purana, Ramayana and Bharata’ in their Konkani translations and also ‘Virabhadra Charitra and Parasurama Charitra’ among original works (Mallaya, 1993:2).

*Indicus Malabaricus*, a botanical compendium of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Da Cunha, 1991 [1881]: 43-44). In Karnataka, the reference is made to the songs and discourses of the saints and Swamis of the Konkani Brahmins (Pereira, 1992 [1973]: 39) which, in all probability, are in Kannada script but though the same script is in use among both - Catholics and Hindus - for writing Konkani, the large number of Konkani speakers who are Catholics find their tradition in the hymns, verses and liturgical items prepared by their priests for use in church and at home. Much of the early writings are in the nature of religious instructions, biographies of saints, guide books on moral and spiritual life. Same is true in case of Goa, where the earliest available literary works are in Roman script; they are religious and linguistic in nature and date back to 16<sup>th</sup> century. As regards Goan Hindus, there is little that can be shown as old Konkani literature in Devanagari script and whatever is documented as extant in the collections of libraries and museums in Europe is largely in Roman script ( Naik, 1990: vi) or in Devanagari script but with mentions of some priests as responsible for transcribing/ transliterating the same. Obviously, no single script can claim to represent or reflect Konkani reality in totality.

The factors at play in each of these cases of duality in literary traditions are either community, religion or caste/ region and language. In Karnataka, where the largest number of Konkani speakers are found, the duality is further qualified by the language traditions of different regional groups in the past few centuries. A large part of North Kanara having lived under the Maratha rule, then under the Bombay Presidency, followed by the Bombay state, before being included in Mysore state (currently called Karnataka), has the history of Marathi language as

medium of education, administration and communication <sup>6</sup>. South Canara, on the other hand, was earlier a part of the Madras Presidency before it became a part of Mysore (later Karnataka) along with certain regions under local princes. History and geography have interacted in the making of language community and its culture in these regions. Migration of Konkani speakers from Goa to these areas in pre-colonial times, during the early colonial colossus and in later years included those who were adventurous and enterprising, those subjected to forcible religious conversions, those who had moved in search of livelihood and also those who moved there in panic and in an attempt to avoid conversions. All these did have their own distinct group choices in their new settings, informed by their cultural, economic and political imaginations as well as experiences. These were modified over time in their search for stability, security and dignity. Though occupying the territory within the same geographical boundaries and claiming to belong to the same place and language, these groups came to speak of their different scripts as their traditions. They produced literatures, developed institutions and evolved a sense of community. In this way scripts became the tools of identity for Konkani speakers. Large part of their imagination and identity construction was the product of their literature produced in these scripts..

#### LITERARY HISTORY IN DIFFERENT SCRIPTS

The literature in Konkani is found in four major scripts viz. Devanagari, Roman, Kannada and Malayalam. The fifth one, Urdu has not received the

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<sup>6</sup>. In coastal towns of Karwar, Ankola and Sadashivgad, there were Marathi medium schools till the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In rural places like Halaga and Hulaga, few kilometres from Sadashivgad, such classes were facing closure in nineteen nineties due to compulsion of Kannada and also demand for English. In administration Marathi was in use till mid-1970s. In a place like Haliyal Konkani speaking people still consider Marathi as their language.

attention of scholars either due to the small size of the population involved, or because of the regional specifics which restrict the use of the script for Konkani to very small pockets, or its relative isolation within the areas of other languages and scripts.

The first bibliography of Konkani literature brought out in 1963 took note of books in three scripts viz. Devanagari, Roman and Kannada, and left those in Malayalam and Urdu unlisted, for want of any count or particulars. Mention is found of Muslims of Koorg and Nawait Muslims of South Kanara writing Konkani in Urdu script, and also that 'there have been Konkani books in Malayali script' (Kelekar, 1963: Preface). The short survey that follows here below suffers the same handicap and has to exclude Konkani books in Urdu script on account of non-availability of ready information even today. The present discussion covers the four other scripts, though not quite exhaustively. The count of books in Konkani has not been kept in later years - scriptwise or regionwise. But the abovementioned bibliography shows that the publishing in Roman and Kannada scripts has been numerically larger and also more regular for a major part of the twentieth century. It is also noted that there is a large amount of writing in these two scripts which has not been published<sup>7</sup>. What the two scripts had in print till mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in an organised way was largely on religious practices, teachings and also creative writing in the form of novels or fiction, all having good readership. Another feature is that a few writers of fiction seem to have wide popularity and are found quite regular in their literary output (going by the number of publications on their names). In case of publishing in Devanagari in

Goa/ by Goans, this cannot be said because the popular fiction was almost non-existent till late 1960s<sup>8</sup>. Even in respect of the ‘Father of Modern Konkani Literature’, Shennai Goembab, the books running into editions have been hardly two or three<sup>9</sup>. In fact, the Konkani book publishing in Devanagari was a late starter as compared to the Roman script<sup>10</sup>. Also the majority of works in Devanagari enlisted in the published bibliography (as many as 68 out of 131) were the ones brought out by four publishers. These included only one professional publishing House, the rest being the Associations or enterprises run by the Konkani activists<sup>11</sup>.

### Work In Devanagari

If we consider the numerical strength of Konkani publications in Devanagari script on the eve of liberation of Goa, we realise that the activity of printing and publishing was conducted from Bombay, and we come across only a few titles published from Goa, of which the majority are stage plays by the

<sup>7</sup>. In Roman script, for example, writing of tiatr for presentation in local feasts and festivals goes on regularly but no tiatr has been published till early 1980s.

<sup>8</sup>. Barring the works of Shennai Goembab, the first collection of short stories in Devanagari script appeared in 1935, which was published in Bombay by writers from North Kanara (*vonvllam*) in their dialect but the one by Goans came only in 1959 under the title *Bhuim Chamfim* (having five short stories, three by Hindu Goans and one each by a Catholic and a Karwari Hindu).

<sup>9</sup>. *Gomantopanishat* Pt. I and II (stories) and *Mogachem Logn* (play) had three editions (1933, 1969, 1989); No other book of his seems to have gone into further editions, though some of them are in demand for academic and research purposes. ‘*Saddeavelim Fulam*’ of Bayabhav was brought out in late 1980s, along with the above, to cater to the demand from Goa University students doing their M.A. in Konkani.

<sup>10</sup>. The first few Konkani books in Roman script were published in mid-1850s with Portuguese titles, whereas the earliest Konkani books in Devanagari were a school primer and a Konkani-Portuguese Dictionary – both by Goan Catholics – almost forty years later, in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The publishing activity in somewhat organised way took off only in the second quarter of the twentieth century with the initiative of the Gomantak Printing Press of Kashinath Shridhar Naik in Bombay.

<sup>11</sup>. The Associations were Konkani Bharati (which was established in mid-1950s with the objective of spreading the Gandhian views and ideology among Konkani speakers), Konkani Bhasha Mandal formed in 1942; the enterprise was the Gomantak Xapkhano owned by Kashinath Shridhar Naik or ‘Bayabhav’, fully devoted to Konkani and to Shennai Goembab, hence honoured as ‘the Ashoka of Konkani’. The only publishing House that figured in this was the Zpopular Book Depot run by Bhatkals, a Konkani speaking family from South Kanara.

Saraswats and very few school books written by Catholics. This was partly due to the censor restrictions imposed by the Portuguese dictatorship in the post-republic phase on printing and publishing in Goa, but more because the protagonists of Konkani using Devanagari script were concentrated in Bombay and also because the language as a print medium had negligible following in Goa till mid-1950s. In Bombay it was Kashinath Shridhar Naik who led the publishing work. Goan Hindu youth took to publishing later under his guidance<sup>12</sup>.

After liberation the things changed with many young Konkani activists, most of them Saraswats, descending on their homeland from their second home that was the metropolis of Bombay. The main work in terms of publishing immediately after liberation involved printing and supply of text-books for schools, some titles to propagate Konkani in education<sup>13</sup> and some periodicals for children to begin with, following the decision of the Za Commission favouring Devanagari. After the eighth *Konkani Parishad* the work of printing and publishing Konkani in Devanagari script gained momentum, through the local *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* (KBM) mainly for popularising the language among children and for its use in education. One major 'event' that followed the *Parishad* was the release of five collections of Konkani poems of the same poet, R. V. Pandit (1917-1990), on the same day in 1963.

In the years before and after the Opinion Poll the local Marathi daily *Rashtramata* carried on the work of promoting Konkani in Devanagari through print whereas the local radio station attracted the local performers and artists to

<sup>12</sup> . Bakibab Borkar and Ravindra Kelekar were leading this generation.

<sup>13</sup> . Ravindra Kelekar was the main person who wrote different booklets in 1962 for *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* Goa. They were titled – *Amchi Bhas Konknnich* (32pp), *Shallent Konknni Kiteak?* (30 pp) etc. and essentially directed to Hindus, being written in Devanagari.

Konkani. Bakibab Borkar (1910-1984), Vishnu Naik, who were the employees with Bombay station of All India Radio till then, continued the work in Goa station and the local recruits like Pundalik Narayan Dande, Krishna Laxman Moye, Kamaladevi Rau Deshpande were soon followed by Nagesh Karmali (b. 1933) and Shankar Bhandari (1928-1987).

In print, the earliest efforts to publish periodicals was that of Kashinath Shridhar Naik of Gomantak printing Press in Bombay in the form of '*Navem Goem*' between 1934-37, followed by Ravindra Kelekar's '*Mirg*' (1953-57) published from Wardha, and two others – '*Saad*', a quarterly (1952-54) and '*Sallik*', a monthly (1955-56) published from Bombay - marked the next decade. After liberation, Gurunath Kelekar started his periodical *Navem Goem* from Goa that continued appearing till 1969; others such as Suhas Dalal (*Pormoll*), Yashawant Palekar (*Gomant Bharati*), Shantaram Varde Valaulikar (*Apurbai*) contributed through their respective periodicals/ annual publications. Chandrakant Keni published the trilingual *Triveni* (Konkani, Hindi and Marathi) for some time during this decade. The continuation of the Union Territory status following the Opinion Poll helped the Konkani literary movement and Goan Konkani writers had their first conference in Margao in 1968. Till then book publishing in Devanagari as a professional activity had not taken off in Goa. *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* and *Gomant Bharati* had published a few books by then but only as a part of their programmes of popularisation of language and spread of new ideas in that regard. *Sanjivani Prakashan* of Gurunath Kelekar published few books for

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children in this decade. *Sobit Sahitya Prakashan* had also started its activity but its major productions came in the 1970s.

The publishing activity got a boost with the establishment of *Jaag Prakashan* at Priol in 1970. Others to follow were *Apurbai Prakashan* (Volvoi), *Rajhauns Vitaran* (Panaji), *Shenai Prakashan* (Veling), *Kullagar Prakashan* (Margao) and many others. Some of these came into being only after the recognition of Konkani by the Sahitya Akademi in 1975. Many more started in 1980s with new writers in larger number appearing on the scene<sup>14</sup>. Publication of special Diwali numbers of Konkani magazines started on the lines of those in Marathi.

The tenth *Konkani Parishad* held in Panaji in 1974 followed by the recognition to Konkani by the Sahitya Akademi were the major boosters for Devanagari, firstly, because of the renewed commitment to single script – Devanagari – publicly offered by Konkani activists of different states from the *Parishad* platform, and secondly, through the resolution in the Akademi<sup>15</sup> favouring Devanagari as the script for Konkani. This status of ‘modern Indian literary language’ also strengthened the claim for inclusion of Konkani as a subject of study in higher education. The newly established Goa Board of

<sup>14</sup> . There were many publications publishing Konkani books in Devanagari starting from early 1980s but most of them were individual enterprises to publish one’s own books or had a few publication each to their credit. e.g. *Nami Prakashan* of Bharat Naik, *Agasti Prakashan* of Dilip Borkar, *Urba Prakashan* of N. Shivdas, *Chamunda Prakashan* of Ramakrishna Zuarkar, *Jait Prakashan* of Bhiku Bomi Naik, *Konkan Times* Publications of Tukaram Rama Shet.

<sup>15</sup> . In the recognition to Konkani by the Sahitya Akademi there was no mention of any particular script. The decision to restrict the benefits of recognition to Devanagari alone was made through a resolution passed in the Advisory Board of Konkani later. This is confirmed by Pundalik Naik and also by Felicio Cardoso, the convener of the Board for the last term

Secondary and Higher Secondary Education introduced Konkani as an optional language at secondary and higher secondary school certificate examinations. Though the shift to English medium at the level of elementary education was almost total in the Old Conquests mainly among Catholics by this time, the three language formula adopted in school education ensured that Catholic students offered Konkani as a third language along with English as the medium of instruction and Hindi as the national language. This also led to their being expected to learn Devanagari for studying the two languages, while all other subjects were taught in English. Inclusion of Konkani in the list of optional languages at the undergraduate level in the University of Bombay followed soon.

With the recognition from the Sahitya Akademi publishing activity got an impetus. The annual literary awards to different books in Devanagari script was a national honour and recognition, which boosted circulation of books and their publishing in a limited way. Many young Goan writers in Devanagari started their own publishing activity and the local government was approached with requests to purchase a few hundred copies of each book for public libraries and schools run by the government. Outside the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu, recognition and awards helped in establishing the association of Konkani with Devanagari script in official and academic circles. This in turn raised demand for the resource and study material in the script. In the decade following the recognition Konkani literary activities in Goa increased with the larger participation of youth who had studied Konkani and also others who considered it as a means of cultural expression. Writing and publishing in Devanagari helped this mobilisation and participation. Demands for opportunities for Konkani on the

television gained voice by 1980s which resulted in the establishment of Programme Generating Facility in Panaji in mid-80s. Goa Konkani Akademi came into being (1985) with its focus on Devanagari as the official representation of Konkani. Its activities, mainly the scheme *Pailo Chonvor* (literally meaning first flowering) of financial grants and subsidies to the first books of budding writers, projects such as *Sahitya Saptak* (Literary Week), workshops for young Konkani writers on different literary forms etc. helped in broadening the base of Devanagari. The Akademi also supported the publication of ‘transcreation’ of the epic *Mahabharata* by Ravindra Kelekar soon after the language became the Official Language of Goa in 1987, and its release in New Delhi at the hands of the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was viewed as a great step forward in the direction of the constitutional recognition that was awaited. This or the earlier translations of ‘*Yakshaprashna*’ and ‘*Raghuvansha*’ of Kalidasa from Sanskrit to Konkani by Shripad Desai published in 1976, translations of the *Bhagavad Gita* both in prose and in verse<sup>16</sup> were claimed as the proof of competency of the language to express the rich ancient Indian thought and ideas, in the line of Shennai Goembab’s *Gomantopanishat*<sup>17</sup>. All this shaped the common standard of Konkani in Devanagari, for Goa, and also prepared a base for staking claims to the ‘national’ status. Most of these publications were promoted by Hindus with

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16. The prose version ‘*Geeta Pravachanam*’ (1956) was the translation of Vinoba’s discourses on Geeta. (*‘Geeta Pravachane’*) in Marathi and in many other Indian languages, and the verse form ‘*Gitay*’ appeared in print in 1960. Shennai Goembab’s translation in prose, ‘*Bhagavantalem Geet*’ was completed in 1935 but published in 1959. At least ten other translations by individuals from North and South Kanara and also Kerala are mentioned in the latest translation (2002) by Suresh Amonkar.

<sup>17</sup>. *Gomantopanishat* published in two parts contained stories that reflected the lexical wealth and expressive ability of Konkani. It also implied a search of knowledge and philosophy (Upanishad) of Goa (Gomanta).

the exception of '*Konkani Sorospot Prakashan*' of Dr. Olivinho Gomes, which has published some works in Devanagari.

A significant step in promoting Konkani was taken after the establishment of Goa University in 1985. The original proposal in the University was for a Konkani Chair but the same was developed into a full-fledged Department of Konkani with the teaching and research facilities from 1987 (*Vishwa Konkani*, 1995). This was followed by the introduction of the language as an optional subject of study at the undergraduate level in local colleges. The work of preparing study and reference material, however, did not take speed. The University also started the project of Konkani Encyclopedia under the editorship of Dr. ManoharRai Sardessai. Originally planned to be published in three volumes of around 1000 pages each it was completed in four volumes by 2001, with consistent committed efforts of Dr. Tanaji Halarnkar, the Executive Editor who took over from Dr. SarDessai after the release of the first volume in 1992.

Though the major work in Devanagari script was from Goa, there were attempts by some people from other Konkani regions to write and publish in Devanagari. The works of Nagesh Sonde published through his *Vasantik Prakashan* or those of N. Purushothama Mallaya published by *Konkani Bhasha Prachar Sabha*, Cochin under his control are more in the nature of individual activities. Also the works of Prof. R. K. Rao through his *Konkani Language Institute* and all the publications of *Kerala Konkani Academy* over the past two decades are the prominent instances. The major shift to Devanagari from Malayalam was seen in Kerala, mainly in Ernakulam - in 1970s - with major concentration of the GSBs there. Konkani speakers in Kerala being largely

Hindus, they have followed the GSBs, thereby leaving little scope for script contest. Also in other places, writers and researchers such as Swami Supriya i.e. Fr. C.C.A. Pai (1927-2002), researcher and writer-poet from Haliyal in Uttara Kannada district, J.B. Sequeira (b.1937) and J. B. Moraes (b.1933), both poets, originally from Mangalore region but living in Mumbai since decades, Santoshkumar Gulvady from Udupi-Manipal, have published books in two scripts - Kannada and Devanagari.

Journalism in Konkani in Devanagari script has not much to offer, except the daily *Sunaparant* published from Margao-Goa, which has very poor readership as compared to any other newspaper of any other language in Goa<sup>18</sup>. Monthlies such as *Jaag* and *Kullagar* have survived for two decades, though the former had plans to suspend publication in mid-1990s due to economic non-viability. Annual Diwali special issues are peculiar to Marathi language periodicals and quite popular in Goa but most of those in Konkani appear quite late and irregularity is not very rare. Perhaps, this is because there is no competition for share in readership and government support through advertisements forms the major source for meeting the cost of production. The same is largely true for book publishing, where the assured purchase of a certain number of copies by the government agencies or departments is the most desired arrangement<sup>19</sup>. But in spite of all this the average number of books published in

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<sup>18</sup> . Raju Naik, who resigned as the Executive Editor of the only full fledged Konkani daily newspaper in Devanagari script in the early years of the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (within five years of the starting of the publication), mentioned the figure of daily sales as 500-700, in his speech at the Silver Jubilee celebrations of KBMK at Mangalore in 2000. The President of Gomantak Marathi Academy in his Press Note in December 2002, quoted the figure of little more than 1200.

<sup>19</sup> . Goa Konkani Akademi, for example, purchased hundred copies of each title for free distribution to various libraries. From those who have received the Sahitya Akademi awards, three hundred copies are purchased. (*Vishwa Konkani* 1995).

Devanagari in a year remained below 50 in the last decade of the twentieth century (Naik, 1995)<sup>20</sup>. In fact the number 52 in 1995 was the highest since the recognition received in 1976 (Naik, 1996)<sup>21</sup>, as per the records that are available.

### **Contribution of Roman Script**

Roman script has been in use for printing of Konkani books since the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The major claims of the past glory of Konkani are based on the works in this script. In modern times, printing and publishing of books and periodicals started in this script in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The script being in use mainly among Catholics for religious purposes, almost all the literature in this script is produced and read by them. Hindu writers and publishers are rare to find and those who do, have their commercial interests above all others<sup>22</sup>. Of late some writings from Devanagari are transliterated to Roman in the monthly *Gulab* regularly but Hindus do not generally write Konkani in Roman script.

The earliest works in the script during the Renaissance period of Konkani were published in the mid-nineteenth century by Miguel Vicente de Abreu<sup>23</sup>. In the concluding years of the nineteenth century Eduardo Jose Bruno de Souza (1836-1905) wrote '*Kristavanchi Dotorn Goyenche Bhaxen*' (Christian Doctrine in the language of Goa) (1897), '*Eva ani Mori*' (Eve and Mary) (1899). some

<sup>20</sup> . According to Fr. Naik there were 45 publications in 1987 while in 1994 there were 50.

<sup>21</sup> In his review of publication activity in 1995, published in *Amar konkani*, he showed that only 52 books came out in Devanagari of which 23 were childrens' books. Many were published by NBT or by some publisher with support from Goa Konkani Akademi and some were Sahitya Akademi releases. all three being the organisations established and by the government and maintained through state funds.

<sup>22</sup> . Prabhakar Tendulkar and his Dalesh Printers from Mapusa are a case in point.

collection of hymns and other works related to religious and family life. His most important works on the language and script were '*Resurreccao do Konkani*' (Resurrection of Konkani) and '*Primeira Cartilha do Alphabeto Mariano*' (First Book of Marian Alphabet) in the opening years of the twentieth century<sup>24</sup>. The first novel '*Kristanv Ghorabo*' (Christian Home) (1911) and the first periodical '*Udentchem Sallok*' (The Lotus of the East) (1889-1894), a fortnightly published from Poona, were his gifts to Konkani (SarDessai, 2002: 101-105). Msgr. Sebastiao Rodolfo Dalgado (1855-1922) compiled his Konkani-Portuguese dictionary in 1893, which contains Konkani words written in Roman script side by side with Devanagari. Twenty-five years before this the first dictionary of the modern times was compiled by an Italian missionary and published in 1868 in Goa (Kelekar, 1963: 66). A decade before Msgr. Dalgado's dictionary, Fr. Angelus Maffei had published his English-Konkani dictionary in Roman script from Mangalore. Another English-Konkani dictionary by Alex M. Dias was published in 1889. In this way the work of pioneers in Roman script for the modern era prepared the ground for rich literary production in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the first decade of the twentieth century printing and publishing in Roman script was largely restricted to devotional literature though in the second half fiction and drama as well as books on other secular issues were printed<sup>25</sup>.

This period is known also for the translations of some theatrical plays and stories

<sup>23</sup> . Between 1855 and 1866 Abreu published five books from Nova Goa, all with Portuguese titles. They were mostly on religious matters. (See Kelekar, 1963. p. 11)

<sup>24</sup> . The titles of these two works are in Portuguese, but they are mentioned in Kelekar (1963) under the Konkani titles in Roman script. It was a practice to give Portuguese titles to publications as can be seen from those given to Marathi periodicals in Devanagari published from Ponda-Goa even in the Portuguese Republican phase of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Dada Vaidya's *Prachi Prabhaa* carried the title *Luz do Oriente* and *Swayamsevak* of Priolkar had *Voluntario* printed on its cover page.

from French, Portuguese and English to Konkani by Shennai Goembab. From the third decade onwards publication of fiction gained momentum (Satoskar, 1975: 194) and by 1950s there were a few writers with a dozen or more titles to their credit<sup>26</sup>. Publishing activity was quite consistent in the Roman script throughout the first half of the twentieth century and the momentum continued till the early 1970s, when the 'recognition' came. But following the 'recognition' and the authorised compulsion of Devanagari script, writing and publishing activity in the Roman script declined drastically (Naik, 1996).

Periodicals in Konkani appeared as the bi-lingual or tri-lingual publications starting from the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. *O Concani* (1892), *A Opinião Nacional* and *O Intransigente* (1894), as Konkani-Portuguese weeklies and *O Povo Goano* (1892), *Leituras Amenas* and *A Civilisacao Indiana* (1893), *A Luz*, *O Bombaiense*, *O Amigo do Povo* and *The Echo* (1894) as the Konkani-Portuguese –English weeklies survived for varying durations of a few months to a year or two in most of the cases. Little is written about them in the accounts of the language movement. Roman script had its first daily newspaper *A Defesa Nacional* (1894) in Konkani-Portuguese, which was short-lived. The first fully Konkani bi-weekly *Udentichem Sallok* (1894) brought about the shift to unilingual journalism before the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw another Konkani daily *Sanjechem Noketr* (1907) in Bombay: the following decade witnessed the launch of *Dor Mhoineachi Roti* in Karachi and

<sup>25</sup> . In the first half of the decade there were manuals and catechisms , biographies of saints in large number, while in the last years of that decade an album of Konkani songs (1908), a *tiatr* (1909) and some humorous prose (1910) appeared in print along with religious and historical matters.

<sup>26</sup> .Antony Vicente da Cruz, Nascimento Dias, Ramon M. A. Dias, Reginald Fernandes. Caridad Domasceno Fernandes are some prominent names.

*Vauraddeancho Ixtt* in Goa, both of which are published till today. After 1920, many more weeklies, bi-weeklies, monthlies were started in Bombay and Goa, and quite a few of these survived for almost half a century and even more in some cases (Barros, 1970: 95). They played a significant role in communication within the language community in the crucial years of its political and cultural transition. While the fact that so many periodicals including daily newspapers appeared in the script shows the intense urge for expression and communication in Konkani among its users, survival of a large number of them for years and decades, even nearing a century in a few cases<sup>27</sup>, is a proof of managerial ability of their publishers and economic viability of these productions. All these were managed by Goan Catholics.

Hindu writers in Konkani tried to publish some periodicals in Roman script, the main among them being '*Porjecho Avaz*' edited by Bakibab Borkar and '*Gomant Bharati*' edited by Ravindra Kelekar both published from Bombay in 1950s. Their objective was to politically 'educate' Goan Catholics (Kelekar????) settled in Bombay and also to curb the adulteration of language (Barros, 1970: 96). They did not survive beyond a few years.

Liberation of Goa was seen as the new era for the Konkani Press, in Roman script, in Goa (Barros, 1970: 96). The first weekly in the Roman script born in liberated Goa was '*Goemcho Saad*' (1962) started by Felicio Cardoso, then changed to '*Saad*' after a year, which was short-lived. '*Uzvadd*' (1963) could not continue beyond a few months. In 1967 the two dailies - Konkani '*Sot*' in Roman

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24. Some of them were started in early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century from Karachi, Bombay and then shifted to Goa. *Dor Mhoineachi Rot*, *Vauraddeancho Ixtt* are the examples.

script and Portuguese '*A Vida*' - combined into '*Divtti*' which also had the same fate. Many other periodicals appeared on the scene after that<sup>28</sup> but could not continue for long. In late 1970s Gurunath Kelekar's '*Goemcho Mog*' (1977) had made a room for itself during five years of its existence but was wound up for launching a daily '*Novem Goem*' (1982)<sup>29</sup> in both the scripts independently. This latter in the Roman script did not succeed and was closed after six years and the other in Nagari script did not come out. Another later attempt '*Goemcho Avaz*' (1989) started by Fr. Freddy da Costa could barely survive beyond a little over a year. But the monthly '*Gulab*' (1982) of Fr. Freddy has completed twenty years in 2002.

While literary expression found its way through printing and publications, there was an equally strong stream of popular theatrical activities in *tiatr* and musical expression in *cantaram* mostly as a part of these performances. Themes were generally contemporary and vocabulary drawn from the routine usages laden with Portuguese and English words. The *tiatr* grew as a commercial movement and groups of artists multiplied over the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Kale, 1986). The art form drew its substance largely from the traditional performances or *khell* common in Goan villages during festival season and themes reflected the socio-economic as well as cultural and political life experiences of Goans in general and Catholics in particular. Though these performances - amateur as well as commercial - attracted large audiences, they remained oral as a general practice

<sup>28</sup> . In the post-Opinion Poll years Felicio Cardoso's '*Loksaad*' followed by '*Gomanta Suryo*', '*Goemcho Fuddari*', '*Gaenkar*', '*Goemchem Ful*' proved short-lived.

<sup>29</sup> . In the years following the Sahitya Akademi recognition the Shennai Goemchab birth centenary was celebrated and in order to broadbase the language movement a *yatra* was planned. It was used to collect funds for starting the daily editions of a newspaper in two different scripts (Roman and Devanagari), of which only one (the Roman script edition) materialised.

because not many writers got their *tiatr* scripts published in book form. Same was true for *Cantar* till the post-liberation boom in audio productions which influenced Goans in Bombay before it entered Goa. Both *tiatr* and *cantar* represent the popular creative genius of Goan Catholics but in terms of literary tradition and wealth they go unnoticed and are often discounted as means of momentary entertainment for the masses.

### **Kannada scenario**

Use of Kannada script for writing Konkani is found in pre-colonial times. Ghantkar in his introduction to '**History of Goa through Goykanadi script**' (1993) says:

'...during the times prior to and even after the Portuguese conquest of this our beautiful land the writing of the native language was done by and large in Canarese script, popularly known as Candevi or Goykanadi. But, unfortunately, only a little of the material in that script is extant or available.' (p.IX)

According to him, around the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century only the *Goykanadi* script was used in Salcete. This was changed through official policy of the colonial rulers<sup>30</sup>. Also in the New Conquests its use dwindled steadily and by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the Modi script replaced it followed by Balabodh. This explains the genesis of the system of training in four scripts that was the order of the day among Hindus at the end of the nineteenth century.

Konkani writing must have continued in Kannada script by those who migrated to the south of Goa. The local script in the new setting (South Canara)

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<sup>30</sup>. A government order of 1614 quoting a vice-regal order fixing a time-limit of two years for the village clerk of Cortalim to begin writing his office records in Portuguese language instead of using the "letra da terra" (native script), is mentioned as an instance (p. X) by Ghantkar.

would not have been entirely strange to them, while the language possibly was<sup>31</sup>. Having settled as a community in new places, they continued the use of their own language for internal communication but had to adopt Kannada language for communication with the locals. The degree of internalisation of the local language was determined by the socio-economic status of different groups of these immigrants. While the converts were mostly in agriculture, the upper caste Hindus were either traders or agents - commercial or political – of the local rulers or the colonial powers, which roles demanded linguistic competence for communication. However, the script remained a common heritage.

The earliest writings in Konkani in Kannada script are attributed to Fr. Angelus Maffei, who combined the roles of Fr. Thomas Stephens and Mr. J. H. da Cunha Rivara in his work for Konkani<sup>32</sup>. His dictionaries came within five years of his introduction to the language. The Konkani speakers till then had their folk literature including songs and stories and Catholics in particular had religious prayers, hymns etc. The Printing Press started by the Jesuits in 1882 facilitated the printing of Maffei's dictionary in 1883. Fr. Maffei gave a call to Konkani speakers to lift their mother-tongue from its plight. He was followed by some

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<sup>31</sup> . Dr. Manohar Rai SarDessai opines that it was the 19<sup>th</sup> century British policy of introducing Kannada language as the medium of education that gave impetus to Konkani language and literature, by presenting a script to Konkani speaking people of Karnataka.

<sup>32</sup> . Fr. Stephens had made the material in people's language available for the religious and also initiated the scientific study of the language, thereby addressing the spiritual and the academic needs during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Cunha Rivara not only presented Stephens' historic work to the Konkani people, but also awakened them to 'restore the mother tongue to its rightful place'. Fr. Maffei's work of compiling a dictionary and a grammar of Konkani, preaching in Konkani and asking people to serve their mother tongue combined all the three aspects – spiritual, academic and temporal. In this sense he replicated the job of both the above in Karnataka.

priests through their compositions, translations, compilations etc. (SarDessai, 2000: 253). Literary activities in the script started with the landmark publication of *Konknni Dirvem* as a monthly in 1912. Started by a poet Luis Mascarenhas (1887-1961) with the help of U. Kannappa, a non-Konkani person, the magazine initiated and inspired many to write. The fields of poetry and short story were filled with young Konkani writers. The first full length original novel on social theme was '*Angel*' by Joachim Santan Alvares (1915- 1993), published in 1950. Many others followed, prominent among them being V. J. P. Saldanha (1925-2000), A. T. Lobo (b. 1920), Edwin J. F. D'Souza (b. 1948), Stan Ageira (b. 1961), each with a number of novels to his credit. Again, these novels, some running into more than 500 pages each, have run into three or more editions and sold. Other genres like short stories and poetry have been quite rich and popular. Plays written by both Hindus and Catholics have been staged and published. While the tradition among Hindus is linked with temple performances, Catholics refer to *khell* as inherited from their folk tradition for their theatre movement. The earliest play of the modern age is said to be Bolantur Krishna Prabhu's *Chandrasahana-nattaka* written in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and its popularity continued for over four decades in the Kanaras as well as Kerala. Few others such as G.N. Laxman Pai, Umanath Dongarkeri or Dongerkeri Umanath Rao (1898-1967), Sundar Ullal, Devrai Baindoor or Baindoor Devrayu Aiyangal (1910-1999), Kudpi Vasudev Shenoy, B.V.Baliga (b. 1918) have enriched the Konkani stage in the region. On the Catholic side the beginning was made with religious plays in the 1920s and the progress continued under St. Joseph Natak Sabha in Mangalore established in 1938. A large number of playwrights have

contributed immensely, some with individual score of over 25 plays, though many were religious. V. J. P. Saldanha penned many successful plays which were appreciated. The champion of Konkani stage among *Manglurkars* was C. F. D'Costa, the *Chafra*, 'considered as the best playwright Karnataka has ever produced' (SarDessai, 2000: 292). G.M.B.Rodrigues was the author of over fifty plays. There are many others with a good number of plays on their name, also staged successfully and published. Konkani theatre in Mangalore and Bombay has a history of almost a full century.

Journalism in Konkani in Kannada script has made a mark on the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century because of a number of publications not only surviving but also gaining economic viability and popular credibility. Starting from '*Konkani Dirvem*' Konkani journalism has come a long way in Kannada script. The metropolis of Bombay has served as the breeding ground for many of these publications in their early stage. Even *Dirvem* was managed from Bombay for major part of its life, as its editor Alex Pais was a legal practitioner there. With the starting of '*Raknno*' in 1938 as the journal of the Mangalore Diocese, *Dirvem* could not survive. In 1948 '*Sukh-Dukkh*' started as a weekly in Bombay, which was followed by another weekly '*Painnari*' (1950), '*Mitra*' (1953) which later became '*Zelo*' and '*Konkan Daij*' (1958) on the lines of 'Readers' Digest'. The last had to be closed down but others still continue and are economically stable. Few others such as '*Samajichem Vajra*' and '*Ekvott*'- both monthlies, '*Jaagmaag*' and '*Vishal Konkan*' – both weeklies, '*Sankall*' – a monthly and '*Samajichem Ful*' (later only '*Ful*') – a daily, did not survive.

Return of some popular writers to Mangalore from Bombay in 1960s led to starting of some periodicals. Monthly '*Kannik*' (1965) of Raimundo Miranda celebrated its silver jubilee, while the weekly '*Udev*' (1974) of *Chafra* could not continue beyond 1977 and even in its rejuvenated tenure since 1987 it appears irregularly. A number of periodicals have lived for short spans. The two monthlies - '*Umallo*' (1989) in Mangalore and '*Jai Konknni*' (1994) from Kundapur - have continued as the latest arrivals on the scene. The two major publications deserve mention for their special features. '*Amar Konkani*' (1981) devoted to research is published as a half-yearly in Kannada and Devanagari by the Institute of Konkani of St. Aloysius College, Mangalore whereas '*Kurov*' (1989) is a monthly novel series at the least cost which had published and sold 81 titles by 1995 (Moraes, 1995). This short survey shows the trends of journalism in Konkani in Kannada script, mainly under the control of the Catholics. Besides these, many journals published as Diocesan publications have their specific readership and assured sustainability.

Saraswats (GSBs) had their monthly '*Saraswat*' founded around 1923 and revived around 1941 (Pereira, 1992 [1973]: 41), which was short-lived. *Navyug* (1949), *Sarvodaya* and *Uzvarh* (1947) in Karwar, *Konkan Kinara* (1950) in Kumta also did not last long nor are now accessible. In 1967 was started '*Panchakadayi*' under *Konknni Bhashoddhar Trust* which has continued till today in two scripts - Kannada and Devanagari. '*Jai Konkani*' which has been already mentioned, though published by a Saraswat (GSB), it does not restrict itself to the dialect or style of the caste or matters related to one particular caste/community.

Publications in Kannada script have surpassed all other Konkani publications in any other script. Its readership has remained relatively steady. There have been attempts to explore the celluloid medium in the past two decades. Radio broadcasts have been regular from Mangalore station and only in a small measure from Dharwad station. Not much is now seen from Mumbai station which had played a significant role in forging Konkani language consciousness in the post-independence decade. In education a little bit of effort is seen in Mangalore, that too, isolated and not co-ordinated.

### **Malayalam Script And Konkani**

Konkani writing in Malayalam script is a development necessitated by the assimilationist trends in a multi-lingual situation. The Konkani speaking settlers in Kerala have been isolated from the Konkani speakers' homeland for centuries. While the traditional Konkani speakers here are from all castes, the language is identified with only a small section of elites among them viz. GSBs, who have acquired the name Konkani. They have claims to certain writings on mythological stories which are said to be written in Malayalam script.

With no bibliographical records or written history of literary works till 1960s, Konkani in this script was surveyed by Dr. Jose Pereira, who, in his **Literary Konkani** (1973) mentions the following names under the history of Keralli variant with not many details of their contributions: Amula (or Amulakka Shennai (1851-1902) perhaps the greatest among the poets and poetesses of Kerala, Narayana Narasingha Pai (1878-1959) of Ernakulam. R.C.Sharma (1896-1982) of Pallipuram, G. Kamalammal (1900- 1983) of Alleppy, authoress of an

*ovi Ramayana*, V. Ganesh Prabhu (1902- ) of Cannanore, C. Narayana Malo or Mallaya (1912-1966) of Cochin, Vedavati Shennai of Alleppy etc.....

As regards the linguistic studies, a dictionary and a self-teacher of Kerala Konkani by R. Ranganatha Prabhu (1898-1965) of Alleppy, and a primary Konkani grammar of A. Anantasarma Shastri (1910- ) of Cochin, as also a dictionary of Kerala Konkani compiled by Ranganatha Sheshagiri Prabhu (1919-1965) find mention in Dr. Pereiras's work. Monograph on Konkani, Census of India-1971 (GOI, 1976) is the result of a study conducted over the decade of 1960s (Mallaya, 1993: 11). Some works aiming at the propagation and popularisation of Konkani after the recognition from the Sahitya Akademi appeared in Devanagari. The major contributions such as *Konkani Swayam Shikshak* (Konkani self-instructor) (1975), '*Konkani Vyakarann*' (Konkani grammar) (1977), '*Konkani Malayalam Swabodhini*' (Self-instructor of konkani and Malayalam) (1988), were by Prof. R.K.Rao and '*Konkani-Hindi-Malayalam Kosh*' (Konkani-Hindi-Malayalam dictionary) (1987) of Dr. L. Sunitha bai was brought out under a U.G.C. sponsored project of comparative dictionary.

Though Konkani speakers in Kerala claim to have switched over to Devanagari script in post-1960s, there are many who still write the language in Malayalam script. There are two publications based on the old folk material found written in Malayalam script in Kerala. *Godde Ramayana* (1989) was found in 1982 in the house of a Saraswat in Ernakulam. Written on palm leaves, the work, which is incomplete, is considered around 200 years old (Rao, 1989: v), seen from the style of language and script. The other is also a folk song '*Shravonn*' (1996) transliterated from the one published earlier in Malayalam script 'for the benefit

of Konkani in Kerala' (Kamath, 1996: 7) as transcribed from the audio recordings from the oral recitation. Few others such as *Konkani Lok Geet* (1998 [1976]), a collection of folk songs and *Venkatesh kalyan* (1988), a *stotra* (prayer of Lord Venkatesha) are now published in Devanagari script.

That the use of Malayalam script was common for Konkani even after 1960s is evident from the '*Konkann Janatha*', a monthly edited by R. Subhashchandra Prabhu (1941-1996) started in 1972. This is true also for other journals such as '*Saraswata Ratna*', '*Vyasa Vani*' or '*Vaishnava Ratna*' published from different places in Kerala. But the local activists observed that this was the case only with periodicals. In case of books not even ten percent of those published in Kerala after 1960 were in Malayalam script (Pai, 1993: 54).

Having seen the nature and extent of literary work done in Konkani in different regions through different scripts, it should now be easy to understand the reasons why different people consider the modern age of Konkani being ushered in at different times<sup>33</sup>. This dating is mainly the result of their specific regional and communal perceptions about the developments in the language and its literary sphere. Konkani as a language community was compelled by various factors to acquire these differential perceptions, which were represented by different scripts. Multi-literalism as a feature of Konkani can be studied in its different aspects.

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<sup>33</sup> . In Goa, the Roman script activities date back to mid-nineteenth century (following Cunha Rivara's work), whereas in Canara they see the last quarter of the century (1883 onwards – with Fr. Maffei's dictionary and grammar) as the beginning of the new age. In Devanagari the early twentieth century beginning with Shennoi Goembab's works) marks the Renaissance whereas in Kerala the the modern age of Konkani literature is said to start from the second half of the twentieth century (Rao, 1989: iii).

Factors that caused multi-literalism and the socio-cultural consequences of multiliteralism are important for this study.

## CAUSES OF MULTILITERALISM

Formation of Konkani as an Indo-Aryan language has been studied by linguists in the past two centuries. Its relation to Sanskrit through Prakrit and Apabhramsa has been highlighted by scholars. On the basis of this Konkani has been associated with Devanagari script (Dalgado, 1893; Maffei: 1883; Desai: 1993). But the socio-cultural reality of multiple scripts used for writing Konkani has existed for more than three centuries and the issue of script has figured all through the 20<sup>th</sup> century in all the major discussions on this language and its literature, be it in print (journals, books) or in public debates (*Parishad* resolutions, literary discussions). The major factors that resulted in this multi-literalism can be categorised into political, economic and cultural ones, each of which are discussed here in brief.

### **Political Factors**

Konkani as the speech of Konkani is firmly rooted in Goa, according to the early religious functionaries who studied the language. Colonial encounter experienced by the port-town Goa of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries has a major role in the making of Goa and Goans, their culture and language among other things. It was a cultural catastrophe of a different kind and of everlasting impact as can be seen from the accounts of various religious, administrative and political decisions

and actions - reflected in their documents, orders and decrees - made available through translations and excerpts in the past eighty years<sup>34</sup>.

The Roman script was made compulsory for use in local administration by the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century as almost all the *comunidades* in the Old Conquests were transferred to new converts. Many converts had to leave the territory to avoid persecution for continuing with their old practices. *Bardeskars* who shifted to the areas across the ghats in the Marathi speaking areas such as Ajra, Gadhinglaj, Ichalkaranji, some villages in Belgaum district, and some others in Dharwar district were left to the care of *irmaos* without any religious authority for some years before they were organised by the priests (Fernandes, 1996). In the coastal areas of Ratnagiri, Malvan, Vengurla in the present Sindhudurg (Maharashtra) the study and practice of Marathi and Devanagari became common. All these Catholics living under local rulers adopted the local language for social communication, education (even in schools run by christian missionaries) but continued the use of Konkani in their houses and the church. With Devanagari script many of their prayers are in Marathi, church services and sermons are also in Marathi. These are the facts that Goan Catholics, by and large, find difficult to comprehend. In Goa, school education under the Portuguese, largely under the parish schools consisted of learning the Roman alphabet, elements of church music and religious songs, hymns etc.. Through these the status of students as subjects of the Portuguese empire was

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<sup>34</sup> . During the period starting from the Portuguese Republic (1910) many Goan writers – both Hindu and Catholic – started exploring the old documents of the early colonial period and as a part of nationalist campaign quoted liberally from them often in translation, to arouse anti-colonial sentiments. T.B.Cunha, Menezes Braganza, Dr. Govind Pundalik Hegdo Desai, Adv. Laxmikant Bhembre, and many others have done this. Dr. Panduronga Pissurlencar was instrumental in making many of these available through his writings and also as the Chief of Goa Archives during Portuguese rule between 1931 and 1961.

highlighted and a strong sense of resentment was developed towards anything of the Hindus or Indian. This created a general feeling of superiority among those knowing the Roman alphabet and Portuguese language, which symbolised the Portuguese power. Acquisition of the elements of script, music and religion were accompanied by change in dress, diet and etiquettes. These formed the substance of a different political identity, which Goan Catholics carried with them.

At the time of the entry of the Portuguese in Goa, *Goy-kanadi*- a variant of the contemporary Kannada script - was in use in the village administration (Ghantkar, 1993: XII). Documents written in the script are available in the Goa Archives and some of them have been published in the book '**History of Goa through Goykanadi script**'. In the year of the compilation of Mexia's *Foral*, 1526, Krishnadas Shama began his '**Shri Krishna Charitra Katha**', the first Marathi work written by a Goan (SarDessai, 2000: 31). This was almost half a century before Sant Eknath wrote his '*Bhagavata*'. The use of Devanagari in Goa during this period is not possible to confirm as 'it is not clear whether the original version of the stories from the epics was written or oral' (SarDessai, 2000: 30). Throughout the colonial period Roman script was in use in Goa for Konkani while *Balabodh* was taught by Hindus to their children. After the beginning of secular education in the nineteenth century there were attempts to publish primers in *Balabodh*. It was only after the spread of modern Marathi education among Hindus that *Balabodh* or Devanagari came to be used. In this the role of nationalist movement is significant. For the first half of the twentieth century the

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script movement in India moved ahead through nationalist struggle and in case of Konkani promotion of Devanagari was seen as a national cause.

In the post-independence scenario linguistic re-organisation has made regional and state language compulsory in administration and education. As a result education in state language has gained political support and official patronage. Konkani speakers living in different language territories have taken to this education as a result of which the local language and its script is in common use among them. Those under the British had the advantage of English education that helped them look further for economic development but in the areas under the local rulers local language was promoted and Konkani speakers there were at a disadvantage. In Kerala English education was not quite common till the last quarter of the twentieth century and only elites could afford it. Among Konkani speakers in Kerala the GSBs alone were the beneficiaries till recently. For others education in regional language offered local script which they had to use for their own language. Place of Hindi in the local curriculum being nominal and for only three years in school education, there is not much benefit to Konkani. Political decisions, administrative requirements at national and regional levels differ. Sections of Konkani speakers are subjected to these differences. These differences generate cultural compartments within the language community.

### **Cultural Factors**

Multiliteralism can be attributed to cultural history because the choice of script is a part of learning a language for use beyond inter-personal transactions. As a shared system it determines the self-image of the community and its

members. Also, adoption of more than one script shows that the language community in question has had a diverse cultural experience in the course of its history. In case of Konkani we find that script became the tool of identity for different sections in different regions.

Diringer's dictum that 'alphabet follows religion'<sup>35</sup> proved true in the Goan and Konkani context, as is seen from the Jesuit enterprise during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. What was largely oral till then was soon transformed into written, using the Roman script and also new compositions were added as needed for use by these converts. Over the years the large scale conversions of the inhabitants in the Old Conquests led to increasing use of Roman script for writing the local tongue. This also necessitated the learning of the language by the priests working in the region, which in turn caused further spread of the language through this script.

As introduction of Roman script for Konkani is associated with Christianity and Portuguese rule, it is clear that script is generally seen as a strong cultural weapon. Even before the Inquisition was established in Goa there was a campaign started by the Bishop Joao de Albuquerque to confiscate Hindu religious books with a view to stop idol worship (Bhembre, 1985:28). The First Provincial Council held in 1567 requested the King to prohibit Hindus from keeping their books with them and King Sebastiao decreed that no Hindu should possess any material including books concerning their sects nor they should carry or import such material from outside. This made the destruction of such material in native language an official act.

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<sup>35</sup> . David Diringer in his book 'The Alphabet' published in 1958 says 'It has been said in reference to the Arabic alphabet that 'if trade follows the flag, the alphabet follows religion' (p.301) (Prabhudesai, 1963: 100).

Imposition of restrictions on marriage performances (Bhembre, 1987: 45-98) or dress code for *gentios* (Angle, 1994: 43) and such other decisions relating to socio-cultural practices among locals over the long period of Inquisition (1560-1812) were intended to remove all the signs of resemblance between Christians and Hindus. The Provincial Councils of 1567, 1585, 1592 issued strict orders to avoid communication and interaction between Hindus and Catholics, on the issues of faith.

Introduction of new script in the territory and its adoption for a language, that had, till then, nothing consistent in the nature of writing, led to the making of a community forced to sever its links with the past. It also implied sharing an identity with the new political authority reinforced through religion. This new religion made it quite easy for the converts to seek economic opportunities with other colonial powers which had emerged on the Indian scene. The script became a vehicle of transition and transformation in socio-cultural as well as politico-economic spheres. The sense of authority and authenticity was lent to the activities of the local institutions through the script, as seen in the order of 1614 mentioned earlier.

Cultural function of script is associated with other aspects of cultural life. Konkani in different regions written in different scripts also acquires other elements of language such as lexical and structural items and modes. This is evident in all the styles. In Roman script the Portuguese sounding words have been formed and popularised (e.g. *istimacao, cascicao, fugacao, reformad, assertad, zelad, purrad, pezad, cansad*), so also in Kannada script there are Kannada sounding words (*mundarilam, gadyo, nej, mulo, pakkaso*) and in

Malayalam script the Malayalam sounding ones (*mana ayalem, molo, aaraatt*). Numerous rituals and practices are not only named differently but differ also in content. This means that two scripts create two different images that grow into two different systems. In this sense, writing not only restructures human consciousness (Ong, 1990: 78) but also reshapes it socially. Among Goan Catholics, Roman script was not only a symbol of the new Faith but also an image of new cultural and social ethos that these converts were to be offered. Their expressions in language and speech, music and dance, dress and diet, celebrations and festivals were transformed through the element of script. This is revealed in a cursory comparison between Goan Catholics and those living in Marathi language areas. In the areas of western Maharashtra, we find Catholics wearing Dhoti-Kurta or sarees in the regional style and speaking Marathi in the church. For them Roman script is alien and the modern dress western. Their children have adopted Devanagari script and studied in Marathi medium schools, as a result of which they have acquired Marathi as a means of social and cultural expression (Fernandes, 1996). With education and communication in Marathi, their economic prospects lay largely in the Marathi speaking towns of Kolhapur, Pune, Sangali, from where some have fanned out in search of employment or enterprise. Also their political and economic life revolves around Marathi and many among them admit their ignorance of good Konkani (*Uzvadd*, Abril '99: 10). In younger generation among them, however, English is appearing in a big way. Increasing number of children joining English medium schools shows their urge for economic advancement and social development.

Multiliteralism of Konkani has its strong cultural basis. Initial Romanisation of Konkani was a tool of christianisation of Goans. Though Konkani language received scientific treatment through adoption of the Roman script, the process of Romanisation also worked as a means of reconstruction of self-image of a section of its speakers. Their religious scriptures and other material of worship such as prayers, hymns were all in this script, because of which their sense of difference from the locals was strengthened. The colonial power used this script in all its affairs and this made a psychological bonding of Goan subjects converted to christianity with the rulers. The community feeling that was developed through the Faith had this script as one of its elements.

### **Economic factors**

Konkani had to adopt multiliteralism mainly due to economic factors. On the eve of the Portuguese arrival Goa was a thriving port city and a trade centre for the hinterland beyond the ghats. Ships from distant lands overseas carried goods to and from this port (Fernandes, 1989: 61-62). As a maritime trade centre the port town had traders and agents knowing and speaking different languages.

But the policy of Lusitanization adopted by the colonial power affected the economy of the territory as people left their homeland to save themselves from forcible conversions and from the terror of the Inquisition. This forced migration to the coastal areas in the south and the upghats in the east created the settlements of Goans in the regions having other languages. The addition of New Conquests during the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century changed the religious composition of Goan population as the predominantly Hindu population was granted the permission for

‘the preservation of their temples, ministers, Brahmins, rites and customs’ (Mascarenhas, 1989: 89). The use of Roman script in writing Konkani had become common among the Catholics in the Old Conquests, whereas the New Conquests had Marathi in *Modi* and *Balbodh* characters. Those areas of the Konkan which remained under the Maratha rule adopted Marathi.

In the south, Goans migrated to Canaras and the Malabar coast. The Kannada script was known to the upper caste Goans who in their new settings found positions under the rulers of Ikkeri. Also as traders and agents they had the advantage of knowing different languages in the port city of Goa which they could use to gain foothold in their new places. That is how we find many Goans in the services of the local rulers in the south and also as agents, middlemen between the Europeans (Dutch, British, French, Portuguese) and the local rulers. Their language was in use within the community and in temples. But with their settlements in those regions, they had to learn the regional languages and scripts. Using the respective scripts they tried to write the traditional religious knowledge and the material for worship. In this way Konkani came to be written in Malayalam script. Kannada script was in use in Goa, which they could continue. But the influence of local language could not be avoided. With constant interaction with the locals and learning the local language Konkani speakers acquired many nuances for their language. The Roman Catholics in the Kannada and Tulu regions also made Kannada script their own for the purpose of writing Konkani. In this way migration was a major factor in the multi-literal development of Konkani.

Metropolis had a tremendous influence on the development of Konkani. Goan Catholics had to migrate in search of livelihood as the Goan economy had crumbled by 17<sup>th</sup> century. British presence in Bombay helped Goan Catholics in getting employment as cooks, musicians, butlers. The dress and diet adopted by Goan converts over the two centuries following the Portuguese rule made them more acceptable to the British. Goan parish schools had given these converts the rudiments of Roman alphabet and writing skills, western music which they could use in their metropolitan life. With their settlements expanding over the years they could develop into a community which prompted them to build a cultural and social world of their own. Script played a crucial role in this. By the end of nineteenth century Goan Catholics had their sense of identity awakened within the metropolis, which was reflected in their publications. Roman script became a symbol of this identity. It kept them close to the British masters and distinct from the larger Hindu community. Their craving for self-expression which was pent up for a long time found a way as they could use printing and communication in the metropolitan settings. Beyond Bombay, they also settled in Karachi from where the publishing activity continued. Roman script served the purpose of developing links with the homeland by using the contemporary and emerging techniques.

In case of Goan Hindus, there were different trends. Those from the Devadasi community who had moved away from Goa after the official ban on their activities in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Radhakrishna, 1998: 7 ) had reached the city of Bombay and sought shelter and support from wealthy families in Parsi and Gujarati communities. Over the two centuries some of the womenfolk got trained in classical Indian music under the renowned masters and gained good name at

the national level. The community had identified itself with the local culture and in their bid to retain their ties with Goa they formed Gomantak Maratha Samaj. As for the GSBs it was a question of establishing as an elite group claiming parity with the Maharashtra Brahmins. Some individuals from this community<sup>36</sup> had already made name for themselves in the shaping of metropolitan civil life. GSBs had moved to Bombay from Goa as well as North and South Canara. Those from Goa had come in contact with Poona through Bombay and aimed at relating to larger Maharashtrian picture with Marathi as their language. The scripts they used were *Modi* and Marathi. But while the metropolis helped in bringing all the GSBs together they were not readily accepted as equals by the Maharashtra Brahmins. The contest was between the GSBs and others such as Chitpavans and Deshasthas. This led to adoption of Devanagari in creative literary activities in Konkani mainly by the GSBs from Goa and North Kanara. Those from South Kanara used Kannada script in Konkani writing, though with few exceptions. Also there were Chitrapur Saraswats who used either of the two depending on their place of residence (Interview – Heblekar). Many in this community made Bombay their home and gained proficiency in Marathi to become writers of repute in that language. In this way metropolis contributed to multiliteralism in Konkani on the one hand and also consolidated the regional groups of Konkani speakers on caste and community basis.

The choice of script was thus guided by economic factors. The Catholic majority in the Old Conquests looked at the wider world of opportunities

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<sup>36</sup> . Bhau Daji Laad and K.T.Telang were the two renowned persons who established different institutions, supported different movements and occupied different positions in the institutional life of the megacity.

beyond the seas whereas the Goan Hindus largely from the New Conquests had their world across the Ghats. Hence the differences in self-perception and cultural imaging combined with varying economic aspirations as well as distinct political vision determined the script use in the multiliteral scenario of Konkani. The interplay of these generated the issues of internal economy.

### INTERNAL ECONOMY OF KONKANI AND SCRIPT ISSUE

Language is considered as a divider not only between communities but also within a community. In case of Konkani this internal division is effected not only by different dialects and styles based on caste, community and region but more through scripts. Because while learning a language is natural to some extent, learning a script is essentially an artificial and planned activity that involves material aspects and planned programmes. In case of Konkani, different scripts have come in use at different times and for different purposes. Each of them have contributed to the making of Konkani language and literature and all the claims of Konkani have counted on these diverse contributions. At the same time, as a result of this diversity, the language community as a whole has never gained access to the whole treasure of the language. In this sense what is claimed as common linguistic heritage is not only distributed between and restricted to specific regional groups, but has also generated divisions and compartments within the community. This in turn has led to contests and conflicts in the form of claims and counterclaims from different sections over propriety and eligibility, equity and authority.

As Konkani is written in five different scripts, its cultural canvas is segmented between these scripts. Users of each script are concentrated in different geographical areas where the cultural space occupied by their language is neither uniform nor politically recognised. Majority of Konkani speakers in India live in the Dravidian language regions, and outside India there are Goans, Mangaloreans and other Konkanis for whom Konkani is their tradition but mostly in forms other than linguistic or literate. This presents a problem of internal economy of Konkani specifically in the context of script.

Internal economy of a language implies the complex conception of the gradations of competence in language and its political effect (Kaviraj, 1990). In case of Konkani these gradations of competence are multiplied more because of scripts than because of regions, religions, castes and communities as is generally seen. Each script in use for Konkani being in use for some other larger, well groomed language or languages there are number of influences of other languages on Konkani through scripts. In case of Kerala, pronunciation of Konkani words in Malayalam style, inclusion of Malayalam words and usages in Konkani leave any Konkani speaker from outside Kerala perplexed. In Goa the influence of Portuguese is immense and those who preserved the language have been used to syntax and morphology of Latin and Portuguese which they adopted for Konkani along with the Roman script. Over generations they have written and read this way and their understanding of the language, and through it that of the community and the world, is shaped by this process. They produced their sacred texts and ritual procedures in this style which has become their own living style. They do not consider it as alien, unknown or difficult but enjoy its natural flavour. But in

the process of the language movement of the twentieth century, the insistence of Devanagari to write Konkani has developed into a trend to 'cleanse' Konkani of these 'foreign' elements considering them as aberrations and distortions. Those who use these – which also means those who use the Roman script - are obviously at a disadvantage in terms of their communication and exchange. They feel left out of the language community because what they have as language in its written, literary and cultural heritage is denied recognition and position in the larger language community.

### **Scripts In Goan Situation**

In schools Konkani in Devanagari could find greater acceptance in the Old Conquests as a last choice, since teaching of Portuguese was discontinued without much thought and Marathi was seen as the religious language of the Hindus. The strong hold of the church on Catholic masses and its growing presence in the field of education in the early years of liberation helped in the introduction of Konkani; but with the decision to attach the schools in Goa to Maharashtra Board of Secondary Education (instead of Delhi Board as recommended by the Za Commission) Marathi had precedence; also the case for Devanagari script got reinforced. But while Catholic children learnt Konkani in Devanagari script as a subject, most of the missionary schools or those run by the Diocesan Society did not give much importance to it. Students were fined for speaking in Konkani within the school premises. Konkani remained a subject which many managed to pass in at the Board Public examination only because of the leniency in assessment criteria adopted as an unwritten policy, to ensure higher percentage of

results in the subject<sup>37</sup> and to attract more students to Konkani particularly from the Hindu community. As a result the number of students offering Konkani at the Board examinations has increased but the level of competence in the language has hardly improved. Especially among Catholics, finding students with reasonable competency in Konkani in Devanagari script is difficult.

Following the introduction of Devanagari for Konkani in education and literature it was natural to look for its placement in administration. In the early years Roman script was used in forms for applications for ration cards supplied by the government and also in some other official announcements, publications for public information and use. These were widely used by large sections of Konkani readers from the Old Conquests population. But with spread of education and introduction of Konkani in Devanagari script in English schools there was growing use of English that affected the use of Konkani in the Roman script. Hindus by and large preferred Marathi in all such work. Not many among the users of Roman script raised their voice, as English was seen as a status symbol. English was a subject of study in the scheme of Portuguese secondary education whereas in liberated Goa it was a medium of school education acceptable to all.

Though Konkani found a place in school education, it was given a merely marginal, rather nominal place in official correspondence or state administration by the government authorities. When a beginning was made in late 1980s, following the issue of Notification as provided in the Official Language Act, 1987, it was only with Devanagari as its script. Those who lived as Konkani

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<sup>37</sup>. This was admitted by senior teachers in a workshop on orthography organised in 1999 at Ponda. Those involved in the evaluation work at the Board Examinations accept this as a reality.

people and loved Konkani realised that they had no access to the formal administrative sphere that was opened to Konkani. Even in the competitive examinations conducted by the Government of India Goan Catholics studying in Goa were handicapped after the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) revised the scheme of Civil Services Examination around 1980, providing place for regional languages and made passing in the concerned language paper a pre-requisite condition for being declared successful. Konkani had not entered the VIII schedule of the Constitution and hence did not figure in the list of regional languages. As citizens of India, the candidates from among Goan Catholics had no option but to learn Hindi as national language or Marathi as the neighbouring language but the script remained a hurdle in their struggle to gain proficiency in the language, which in turn deprived them of the career opportunities in the higher administration. The relative advantage they had with better fluency and facility in English was nullified by the handicap of script for their own language or other Indian languages. Those Catholics who entered the Civil services in eighties and nineties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were from among those who were outside Goa for generations and had studied other regional languages in school or at a later stage, thereby acquiring the specific script. In this way, script worked to the disadvantage of a large section of Konkani people, mainly from Goa.

Script also came in the way of meaningful participation in democratic process through the Official Language since under the provisions of the Act, one was expected to write Konkani in Devanagari script, as Konkani 'in Devanagari script' alone had become the Official Language. For Catholics Konkani in Roman script was a medium of communication in all spheres of life including religion.

They had always considered it as their language. For them Devanagari was the visible form of Marathi language and Hindu culture. Though Hindus knew Devanagari script, majority - irrespective of caste or community, social or economic status - expressed inability to read or write Konkani in that script, even though they wrote and read Marathi in the same script and spoke Konkani for all purposes in their community life and informal communication. As a result even after fifteen years of passage of the Official Language Act in Goa, government does not receive many letters or applications in Konkani from the public, according to Manohar Parrikar, who as the Chief Minister made a statement to this effect in the state Legislative Assembly in 2001. As members of democratic system, the right of citizens to communicate with the state in their language, duly designated as the state language, exists as a constitutional principle, which in case of Konkani is qualified by the condition of script in law and consequently denied in practice to those who may genuinely wish to use it. In such a situation the users of Roman script feel ignored and cheated (Gomantak Times - ). Their democratic right is qualified by the condition of script because of which their citizenship status is pushed to the periphery .

Literary activity in Roman script suffered because of non-cognisance of the works in this script on par with other scripts, especially Devanagari. In the literary awards of Goa Kala Academy Roman script books figured only occasionally till the passage of the Official Language Act in 1987. Among the 61 titles rewarded in Konkani between 1973-74 and 1988-89. only 8 were from the Roman script. Three writers were awarded twice in this period (Kala Academy, 1999), which effectively reduced the representation of the Roman script writers

among the awardees. In case of Devanagari script writers there were such repetitions and in some instances, all the books of a writer published during specific period were rewarded. Considering the number of books published in the two scripts, books in Roman script were often ignored. This created a feeling among some writers in the script that the Hindu stalwarts in Konkani literary and language movement comment on Roman script writers without reading anything (Interview – Tomazinho Cardoso). Once the language was linked ‘officially’ to a single script, the agencies and institutions using state resources considered the work in that particular script eligible for support, encouragement, incentive and reward. In Goa, Devanagari being recognised as *the* script for Konkani, all the resources are cornered by the section using that script. This has affected the entry of new upcoming writers in the Roman script, as many have turned to English. No book in the Roman script was ever considered for the Sahitya Akademi awards although some sent their entries. Publication of Konkani books by the Sahitya Akademi is limited to those in Devanagari and the sales are very meagre. Suggestion in the Advisory Board for Konkani to publish at least one book in Roman script on trial basis was turned down by the protagonists of Devanagari. The member who suggested this expressed confidence that minimum of one thousand copies could be sold in the Roman script, as compared to only 200-300 copies in Devanagari sold over the years (Interview: Tomazinho Cardoso)<sup>38</sup>. With

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<sup>38</sup> . Though exact figures are not available with any agency, informal discussions with the functionaries of the Akademi reveal the facts of poor returns from sales of books and their lying in stock for long time.

access to opportunities or recognition denied to Roman script literature, writers in the script were disheartened and output in the script was affected over the years.

### **Predicament Of Kannada Users**

In respect of a large population of Konkani speakers in Karnataka the script issue has posed major challenge. They produce literature and perform various cultural activities through Konkani but make use of Kannada script for all these. Even the Mangalore station of All India Radio has its Konkani section using Kannada script. With rich folklore, constant literary and publishing activity catering to the language population larger in size compared to Goa, economically viable journals and periodicals, Mangalore Konkani search for recognition and scope for participation in the larger Konkani movement. All major writers in Konkani had a hope of getting the national literary awards (Sahitya Akademi Annual Awards) for their writings after the senior writers in Devanagari from Goa. But their script became a 'disqualification' and in spite of a vast literature in print, many literary works, going into a number of editions, and read by generations, writers from Karnataka were deprived of the award. Their contribution to Konkani literature has been counted while claiming the 'national' status for Konkani but the condition of script discounts it as 'invalid'. Such 'invalidation' and 'disabling' of a large section of the language community brought forth the issue into the open, in the discussions within the Mangalore section. Goans' hegemony was questioned openly on the *Parishad* platform through the Presidential Address (Madtha, 1997). General feeling was that the provision of Devanagari as the script for Konkani is welcome but the shift should

be planned over a time period in which other scripts should be considered for awards and other facilities (Interview – Fr. Mark Valdar, Msgr. Alexander D’Souza). But the Mangalore camp also has the GSB leaders who side with Devanagari and consider it as their heritage, though, in reality, they hardly use it. Their contribution to literature being restricted to their community journals and programmes they have no stakes in the benefits and rewards through these creative activities. As businessmen, they look at their language as a means of social, economic and political gains. This is seen in their claim to the linguistic minority status, which actually should be available to Canara Catholics who have little presence in Kannada. They have made their presence felt through the Vishwa Konkani Sammelan (The World Konkani Convention, 1995) and planned the ambitious projects of Vishwa Konkani Sanghatan (The world Konkani Organisation) and Vishwa Konkani Kendra (The World Konkani Centre). In the Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy they had their Presidents – B. V. Baliga for a very short term, followed by Basti Vaman Shenoy, a non-literary person for two consecutive terms – and through T.M.A.Pai Foundation they have links with Konkani language organisations in and outside Karnataka as well as with other literary, research bodies under the state and central governments. The political benefits through Konkani and claims to the language and literature as their community heritage make the GSBs the real beneficiaries from Konkani.

### Malayalam Script And Konkani Speakers

Kerala has Konkani speakers whose consciousness of their language is still evolving. The GSBs in Kerala have used Malayalam script to write Konkani as a tradition<sup>39</sup> and their view of Konkani, as their cultural language, has linked it with their temples and family rituals. Though they resolved in a caste conference in 1924 to use Devanagari for writing Konkani (Valavalikar, 1928; Sammelan Souvenir 1996), almost all their communication within the community continues in Malayalam script and in temples too, they communicate largely in Malayalam language ( Interview – Jayashri Shanbhag). As intelligent mediators and businessmen they have managed to derive legal protections for their caste both under the princely states or the colonial powers before independence and under the constitutional provisions for minorities in independent India (Mallaya, 1994). Their literary activities were little known to outsiders when the linguistic consciousness of Konkani was on the rise in other regions since 1930s. Their leaders have gained access to statutory positions and benefits through Konkani more as a caste than as a language group. This has kept other castes away from the language. Script too has played a part, since the GSBs have the relative advantage (though nominal) of closeness with Devanagari through the learning of Sanskrit, while other castes have been exposed to education and social reforms

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<sup>39</sup> . The religious texts they have in Konkani are preserved in their temples and they are in Malayalam script. Many of the writers in the nineteenth century used Malayalam script and their community journals are still published in that script. But they project Devanagari as their tradition on the basis of a certificate written in Devanagari and signed by three Pundits/Vaidyas, attesting the names of plants and trees in the work of a Dutchman in 1665 A.D.

only of late, and hence have facility in the Malayalam script. Moreover, linguistic fanaticism in Kerala coupled with rigid caste structure among Konkani speakers has resulted in literary impoverishment of other Konkani castes till recently. Benefits of Devanagari have been available to GSBs because of their involvement in the work of spreading and teaching of Hindi in Kerala.

### **Metropolitan Mosaic**

In Bombay, the work of Konkani gained momentum before independence and reached its climax during the two decades before the liberation of Goa. After liberation Goan activists of Konkani returned to Goa and many leading writers among Mangalorean Catholics left the metropolis to return home. Those who remained in the city continued the use of Kannada script and supported publications in that script. Hindus, mainly some GSBs, wrote in Kannada as well as in Devanagari scripts. Nagesh Sonde started publishing in Devanagari in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly after the Sahitya Akademi recognition.

Activities of Konkani in Bombay after 1960 were initiated and guided by few individuals among whom F. J. Martyres was on the forefront. Having failed to get Konkani introduced in education in the state of Maharashtra, the *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* (KBM) of Bombay attempted to run some classes in Konkani which did not spread well. Goan writers based in Bombay published their writings in Devanagari in Goa and won prizes and awards from Goan institutions and government bodies such as Kala Academy. Goan Catholics in Bombay who took to English education developed interest in English theatre; they

also found scope in music industry including Hindi filmdom with their skills in music supplemented by their working knowledge of Hindi and Marathi because of their association with the metropolis for generations. Their links with Konkani were preserved through the church service and popular theatre- *Tiatr* – or through their community festivals. In any case they had little to offer to Konkani and they found Konkani of little help in their urban life. Growing trend of emigration to other countries in West Asia, Africa, Europe and America over the past centuries had transformed generations of such families into overseas Goans, whose concern for Konkani remained purely emotional. These Goans had little interest in the script issue of Konkani, as their cultural memory of Goa was rooted in the past – free from linguistic politics and cultural contests. They wanted Goa to be an ideal place for peaceful, serene and carefree life.

### **Script As Language**

As a result of all this, the larger community of Konkani speakers whether in Goa or Karnataka, Kerala or Bombay and beyond, had no serious concern for Konkani in literary form. Different regional groupings had their own perspectives on their language loyalty and the script they used reflected the same. With the essentialisation of Devanagari as the script for Konkani only a very small section of Hindu elites made a case not only for the specific style or dialect of Konkani as standard but also managed to keep others out of the fray in their search for social power and political authority that accompanied the recognised state language. In effect the official recognition and honour claimed in the name of Konkani was cornered by a very small section of Goan Hindus through Devanagari script. The

basis of this could be found in the logic formulated by the Father of Modern Konkani Literature in his historic address- ‘ **If we allow two or three scripts to continue, two or three languages will be created out of Konkani. It will not attain a standard form and this will greatly hamper the unity of Konkani nation.**’ (Valavalikar, 1945: 58 – emphasis author’s).

### LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL CONCERNS

In the traditional use of different scripts in the major regional settings certain questions have been posed in the last century. Use of script is seen as a cultural expression by common people whereas scholars have discussed its linguistic importance. These dual concerns contain some ingredients of identity formation through script. History of use of scripts and also suitability of script for Konkani have received attention from scholars such as Fr. Maffei, or Msgr. Dalgado.

Fr. Maffei in his Konkani Grammar observed that:

‘The Konkani language was formerly written with the Alphabet called Bal bodha or Nagari; sometimes it was written with the Modi Alphabet, which is the Mahratti Alphabet. Now the Kanarese Alphabet is generally used, and although it does not express all Konkani sounds, yet it is better adopted for this than the Latin alphabet.’ (p. 1)

The three scripts used for Konkani in reasonably large sections of the language community in the twentieth century find mention in the above observation made in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The question of choice of a single script, however, came up only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Fr. Maffei’s observation accepted the antiquity of Nagari and inadequacy of the Latin i.e., the Roman script so also the relative advantage of Kanarese over the latter. Though he referred to the

occasional use of the Modi script for Konkani, no other scholar has discussed it with reference to Konkani. Fr. Maffei opined in the same work : 'If we write Konkani with Kanarese or Mahratti letters, many things will be settled by themselves i.e., only by writing in a more suitable Alphabet, especially if we prefer the Mahratti or Sanskrit; because with Kanarese something would remain still doubtful.' (Maffei, 1882: 417). While Fr. Maffei is credited with encouraging the writing of Konkani in Kannada script, his own admission of the inadequacy of the script to express Konkani perfectly is to be noted. His dictionaries and grammar of Konkani provided a springboard for the writing and literary activities in Kannada script. In absence of links with Devanagari script or Indo-Aryan languages, Konkani speakers in the region associated the language with Kannada script and enriched it with literature. In the process they brought their socio-political experiences and their sense of local history to bear on their cultural and linguistic expression, thereby shaping the movement of identity formation. Large numerical presence of Konkani speakers in the Tulu region surrounded by Tulu and Kannada languages brought Konkani writing in Kannada script to life because of the facility of printing available in the script. In case of the Roman script too, it was the technology of printing that gave it preponderance over the other scripts<sup>40</sup>.

The Roman script came to be used widely for Konkani by Goans in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century for communication which was necessitated by the large scale migration of Goan converts who were made familiar with the script in the process

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<sup>40</sup> . It is noted that in the 17<sup>th</sup> century there was a plan to get the types of Devanagari ready in Goa along with the Roman ones, soon after the Printing Press arrived, to facilitate the printing in local language. But the craftsman who was put on the job died before the work was completed and the printing was done in the Roman script alone (Priolkar, 1958).

of evangelisation. The earliest attempt at compilation of trilingual vocabulary in modern times was *Um Novo Vocabulario em Inglez, Portugues e Concanim. Vulgar em Bardez* published from Nova Goa in 1869. There was a compilation of vocabulary of five different languages published in 1892<sup>41</sup> which reflected Roman script users' approach towards their communication needs. In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although literature revolved around religious and cultural life of Goan Catholics, a few primers for teaching the language were also published (Kelekar, 1963: 30). **Konkani-English and English-Konkani Dictionaries** (1901) by A. C. S. Francis, **Letter Writer English Konkani** (1907) by A. C. J. Fransisco and such other works showed the trend among Roman Konkani users to learn English, which was strengthened during the middle of the second decade and in the subsequent decades such publications covered three languages viz. Konkani, Portuguese and English. By 1930 the questions of grammar, orthography were responded through publications such as *Gramatica da Lingua Concani – em Portugues e Concani* and *Concani – Ti nittaen Vachunc ani Borounc Xicchi rit* i.e. Konkani – The method to read and write it properly (both 1933) produced by Vicent Joao Janim Rangel. A number of dictionaries and other instructional material produced since 1888 till 1960s showed how committed and consistent the Roman script users were in their use of Konkani and also their practical approach in learning other languages – mainly European – for better prospects<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>41</sup> . *Vocabulario Concani, Portuguez, English, French and Hindustani* was published by B.X.Furtado & Sons, which had 5 editions by 1937.

<sup>42</sup> . After Goa's liberation in December 1961, Fr. Monteiro's *Konkanichem Gurupustok* i.e. Konkani Self-Instructor was published in September 1962 in four languages (Konkani in Roman script, Portuguese, English and German) for the use of those Konkani speakers spread all around the world and also for others.

In terms of syntax, Roman script subjected Konkani to the system followed in Portuguese. It also led to liberal borrowings from Latin and Portuguese. As regards orthographic arrangements, 'a modified Roman character bristling with dots, accents and italics' created problems but for the semi-literate Konkani speakers, it was the only option available. While other script users or scholars saw certain lacunae in the Roman script as used for writing Konkani, there was an attempt by a Goan to devise a special alphabet called *Mariano* in 1894. *Udentechen Salok* fame Eduardo Bruno de Souza developed the script and published *Udeteche Salok – Alfabeto Mariano poili Cartilh Goyechi Bhas Vachuk Xicchi* (*Udeteche Salok* – the first book of Marian Alphabet to read the Goan language) in the same year, followed by *Primeira Cartilha do Alfabeto Mariano* (The first book of Marian Alphabet) which was published in the 1901 by Soc. de S.S.C. de Jesus (Kelekar, 1963: 60). Though the alphabet did not gain acceptance and popularity it signified a positive approach on the part of the Konkani speakers to have an independent script for their own language. In the larger Indian picture, this could be seen as a linguistic initiative by the small community that was to see its language dubbed as 'a Marathi dialect' in Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India, a decade later. It must be noted that the exercise, reflecting the Roman script users' concern for their language, has not been duly considered or appreciated in the later accounts of the language and literature.

Goan Catholics, who were the main among Roman script users for Konkani had intellectuals and scholars of renown whose contributions to literatures in different languages have been recognised. Their knowledge of

linguistics too should be quite remarkable considering that many of these were priests or teachers of old and new languages. Hence it is unlikely that they were not aware of the need to regulate and modify syntax and orthography of Konkani in the Roman script. There should have been deliberations on these aspects through their journals and newspapers. But with growth in printing and publishing activity in Devanagari script, some among the Roman script users initiated some attempts at purification of their language<sup>43</sup> and following the Vatican II there were translations of religious texts for regular use, which was somewhat resented by a section of Catholics (Gomes in Souvenir, 1967: n.p.). They favoured preserving their old words and expressions in liturgical translations. Over the years English education affected the utility of Konkani within the public as well as private domain. At the same time, with introduction of Konkani in Devanagari script in education, Roman script writing has been affected and not many youth are found in the list of writers. This has given rise to the question of the future of the Roman script of Konkani (Pemkar in *Gulab* – Julh 1999). Those supporting the Roman script and writing in it have started considering multiple scripts of Konkani as its worst misfortune (D'Costa in *Gulab* Julh 2000).

The adoption of Devanagari for Konkani on a major scale was the development of the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this move by the Goan GSBs major work was of Shennai Goembab, who was supported by Kashinath Shridhar Naik. In their bid to show that theirs was a Brahmin caste in its own right the emphasis was on an independent language having clear and direct

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<sup>43</sup> . Felicio Cardoso started replacing the syntax used in the Roman script writings through his periodicals in the mid-60s; The church authorities too, prepared liturgical translations for use in Bombay and Goa but some resented the Goa translation as they saw it as 'purism with a vengeance' due to Sanskritic words included therein.

relationship with Sanskrit. In developing its vocabulary Shennai Goembab 'boycotted Marathi' (Satoskar, 1975: 194) and made it a point to avoid Marathi sounding words and expressions, though many of these had become an integral part of colloquial repertory of Goan Hindus settled in Bombay, more so among the GSBs who had the benefit of Marathi education there. His *Konkani Nadashastra* and *Konkanichi Vyakarani Bandavall* were aimed at distinguishing the language from Marathi in phonetic and structural aspects. Some words created by him did not deliver the meanings (Satoskar, 1975: 194). However, in later years his example was followed by few Konkani enthusiasts but their approach was criticised by Marathi protagonists on account of undesirable and unreasonable stress on alienation from Marathi (Interview – Bhiku Pai Angle).

The issue of standardisation of Konkani has always figured in all the academic and public discussions and deliberations. In case of Konkani in Kannada script there have been some attempts made through *Raknno* involving linguists and sociologists from Mangalore<sup>44</sup>. But the outcome was not very positive, as there was no unanimity even on the minimum basic requisites for routine use (*Amar Konkani* Jan 95). Both organisers and the invited scholars felt that the time was 'not ripe for adopting standardisation' (editorial – *Amar Konkani*: Jan 1995). This was the case with only one dialect – of Mangalore Catholics – and single script – Kannada - under consideration of intellectuals among its users. As different regional styles have been proclaimed as original, pure or genuine (Percira considers *Manglluri* as the standard, Shennai Goembab's

<sup>44</sup> . In September 1994, there was a meeting of Konkani writers in Kannada script to discuss the issue of standardisation, followed by a Seminar on 28-30 October that year. The three papers read at the seminar were on 'Konkani Language and Kannada Alphabet', 'The Orthography for writing Konkani in the period after *Dirvem* and Sylvester menezes', and 'Community, Language and Writing'.

writings have popularised *Antruzi* whereas there are claims of purity of their own dialect from *Karwari* speakers) their individual claims of being fit to be the standard are expected. But Devanagari script veterans and language leaders while evading the issue by equating the written with the spoken have also popularised a specific variety by using the *Antruzi* dialect in printing and literature as a rule. Their recognised grammarian such as Suresh Borkar does not consider linguistics necessary while studying and analysing one's own language. He fears that 'linguistics would swallow us' and prescribes - 'let's write Konkani as we want it' and 'use linguistics only when unavoidable' (Borkar expressed these views in a workshop organised by Goa Konkani Akademi on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1999). This approach is challenged by the Jesuits from TSKK who insist on application of linguistic, scientific criteria in the study and research of Konkani. They question the authority and eligibility of Borkar as a linguist and openly criticise his 'official' grammar (Naik, . This debate has traversed linguistic, cultural, and socio-political terrain of Konkani. Devanagari script writing has been guided by a few language leaders (on the basis of their seniority and not through any recognised academic authority) than any scientific methods and procedures. Konkani Bhasha Mandal and Goa Konkani Akademi have published their rules of writing Konkani correctly which are followed by TSKK rules. The seniormost Goan Konkani lexicographer and editor of *Konkani Shabdhasagar* (Konkani Lexicon) Pandurang Bhangi in the middle of the year 2000 honestly admitted - 'we do not have a perfectly written Konkani grammar as of now' (*Jaag*, September 2000). This is the observation of a committed participant of the Goan language movement and should reflect the reality of the situation. This only

shows that even within the officially recognised script, which is accepted widely (albeit by a small group and in a restricted territory), and disseminated consistently for decades, the target of standardisation has not been achieved. Writing in Devanagari ‘as we want’ has been seen as a narrow caste-based approach and some old activists of Konkani have blamed this approach for their staying away from Konkani<sup>45</sup>.

As a script, western scholars considered Devanagari in high esteem as can be gathered from the following comment – ‘The Indian Alphabet is a marvellous and significant phenomenon quite unrivalled in the world...This Alphabet represents a symmetrical combination of symbols, designed by skilled Grammarians to indicate various shades of sounds, and is grouped in scientific order. The hand of a Brahmanical scholar, dealing with a highly-polished language is detected here.’ (Cust as quoted in Dalgado, 1983[1893]: x-xi). This scientific, symmetrical script appreciated in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was found tedious by the Jesuit pioneers in printing during the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries mainly because of the number of characters and their combinations running into few hundreds (Priolkar, 1958: 14). Though printing technology helped Konkani in one way this handicap of too many symbols forced it to acquire a technically more advanced appearance through the Roman characters by giving up its

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<sup>45</sup> . Adv. Amrit Kansar, ex-MP mentioned in a seminar held at Bicholim in 2001 on ‘why we are away from Konkani?’ that it was because of the treatment given to his writing in Konkani by senior leader of Konkani movement Chandrakant Keni in the post-liberation decade that he stopped writing in or working for Konkani. His contention was that he had not kept away from Konkani but Konkani leadership had kept him and others like him away.

original characters. Shaping of Konkani in the modern times was largely the work of printing technology.

While this contribution of technology and religion to the shaping of Konkani is acknowledged by the Goan leaders of the Konkani movement, their approach to script as a linguistic element is coloured by their cultural concerns. This is seen in the course of language controversy in Goa. Different scripts have their origins in different geographical regions and also in different historical periods (Ong, 1990:85) and many have developed independently of one another (Diringer 1953 quoted in Prabhudesai, 1963). These affiliations to regions and time spaces set the element of script in the cultural sphere. Transformation of speech and thought result from the movement of speech into the sphere of vision. Looking at scripts in use for Konkani we realise that they represent to a large extent diverse cultural images of their users. The consensus on Devanagari among the GSBs in all the Konkani regions is a part of their strategy to forge a common image. For the other Hindu castes Devanagari, as a rule and as a convention, Devanagari represents religion and through it their culture. The process of sanskritization has contributed to this thinking under the age of modernisation. In case of Canara Catholics script is seen as their cultural reality because of the centuries of interaction with local community. But it can also be seen as the continuation of linguistic tradition as it is accepted that Goan language in pre-colonial period was written in a variant of Kannada script, named as *Halekannada* or *Goykanadi* by different scholars. The Roman script votaries have a point when they consider the script as their identity, since they have learnt it as a part of their religion, education and communication. Their socialisation has been going on

almost wholly through this script They have gained a sense of community through the sharing of life experiences in the literature produced in that script. Because of their migratory nature they have carried the script and language together and in learning many other languages this script has helped them. In fact their knowledge of the larger world for the past two centuries has been a gift of the script they used. For them script forms the essential element of their culture. In this way the regional Konkani groupings of script users have their sense of culture preserved in their scripts. Those living in Dravidian language territories have evolved a pattern of socio-cultural association and co-operation with the larger language community surrounding them, for which script is seen as a link. The use of Malayalam script as a tradition and also habit continues among Kerala Konkani including GSBs, though as a community the latter can think of claiming Devanagari to secure certain privileges and to create a distinct identity, because of the economic strength and organised caste authority through their *Maths* and temples.

Cultural coding also involves gradations within the group, and scripts of Konkani as regional codes promote grading with the help of technology and polity. As a part of nationalist consolidation Hindi was promoted and popularised by various organisations and individuals. Devanagari was benefitted by this and other languages using the script were considered national on the lines of Hindi. Principle of unity through language was extended to script and the efforts such as Justice Sharadacharan Mitra's '*Ek Lipi Vistar Parishad*' (conference for the propagation of single script) of Calcutta (established in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, only a decade after Nagari Pracharini Sabha came into being in the

United Provinces) propagated it (Singh in *Maitri*, April 1974). Throughout the independence struggle in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Devanagari was promoted as a symbol of national spirit through Hindi, which made the organisers of the first *Konkani Parishad* (1939) mention it as the 'national' script. Later campaign by Acharya Vinoba Bhave<sup>46</sup>, noted Gandhian and promoter of *Sarvodaya* movement, in favour of using Devanagari for all the languages of India (Govindan in *Maitri*, June 1975) caught the attention of a large number of people. It was around the period of independence and mainly in the Constituent Assembly debates that Devanagari script found more supporters, as most of the North Indian Hindu leaders considered the claim of Arabic script irrelevant after the partition of India. With Hindi in Devanagari script named as the Official Language the script gained official status in addition to earlier 'national' character given to it. This made other scripts subordinate in official terms.

In the case of Konkani the script issue was down played on similar basis. Goan Hindu leadership made attempts to involve intellectuals and scholars among Catholics in the *Parishad* and thereby seek their identification with the movement. The metropolitan socio-political milieu contributed to the success of this strategy in a major way. Though there were persons such as Prof. Mariano Saldanha who favoured the Roman script for Konkani, their association with the *Parishad* gave an impression that they had full faith in the total programme of the *Parishad*. With major issues of autonomous political status in the Indian union and hoping to see Konkani win over Marathi Catholics supported the Konkani

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<sup>46</sup> . Vinoba was in Vellore jail in Tamil Nadu in 1942 where he studied the four Dravidian languages. After 1943 he started speaking about a single script for all the Indian languages. His latest campaign called 'Devanagari for cultural unity in Asia' was announced in 1974 (*NavBharat Times*, Sunday – 17/3/1974).

language movement wholeheartedly, rather unconditionally, thereby enhancing the strength of the 'unified' force of Konkani. Because of overemphasis on 'linguistic nationalism' in the course of debates on Goa, Marathi was seen as 'national' and association of Konkani with the Catholics using the Roman script was dubbed 'anti-national'. In the process, the image of Konkani as the language in Devanagari script got a boost, even though its literary world was too small and restricted. But with this the Roman script users became the second class Konkani people. In Karnataka implementation of Kannada through state policy was on the rise since 1960s and Konkani speakers using Kannada script were made to feel that their language had no script. As more and more of Mangaloreans came in contact with Goans through media such as All India Radio (Bombay) and the press they realised the importance of coming together for their language. The activities of Mangalore Catholics were made a part of the movement through the KBMK and the statutory requirements were interpreted to suit the interests of the users of Devanagari. The tenth *Parishad* at Panaji (1974) brought in the GSB interests from the Mangalore region to the forefront through K. K. Pai, thereby making the productive and creative leadership among the Mangalore Catholics take a subordinate role. The GSBs in South Kanara, dependent almost entirely on Tulu and Kannada for furthering their economic and political interests, found it handy to speak for Devanagari in order to undermine the role of Kannada script in Konkani and to strengthen the Hindu basis of the language movement. The collective commitment to Devanagari in the tenth *Parishad* by all the regional groups was to affect the Kannada users the most as was seen later. This was an indication of their script being considered their cultural deficiency and a wart in

their identity. Equating the Roman script with European culture and Kannada script with the Dravidian, the language leadership sought the monopolistic position for Devanagari in culturally defined national status of their language.

Recognition of the multi-literal reality in case of Konkani over the century is accompanied by the recent suggestions and experiments in transliteration. There are attempts in this direction mainly in Kerala and Karnataka. With the switch over to Devanagari from Malayalam as a policy in Kerala, transliterations of folk and religious literature have taken place. The transliterations from Devanagari to Malayalam script in Konkani are not many in creative literature as the large majority of Konkani speakers are still with the Malayalam language, and thus translations from Konkani to Malayalam are few.

In Karnataka on the other hand there have been consistent attempts to transliterate the works from Devanagari to Kannada and some works from Kannada to Devanagari. The two journals – *Amar Konkani* and *Panchakadayi* are printed in both the scripts – Kannada and Devanagari. There are few books printed in two scripts<sup>47</sup> one of which was awarded the Sahitya Akademi award in 1985. In Goa publishers in Devanagari script are not so enthusiastic about this though there have been some pieces published in periodicals. The transliterations from Kannada script are restricted to the works of C.F. D'Costa (*Chafra*), one of which got him the Sahitya Akademi award.

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<sup>47</sup> . Fr. Pratap Naik published *Kanadi Mati-Konkani Kavi* (Kannada soil – Konkani poets), an anthology of poems. Swami Supriya of Haliyal published collections of stories for children and religious literature such as Psalms from the Bible in 1980s, J. B. Moraes published '*Bhitorlem Tufan*', a collection of poems in 1984, Maurice D'sa of Mangalore published his collection of poems '*Kira Bonch*' (Parrot's Beak) in 1991.

The Goan Konkani leadership, aware of the need to get acquainted with literature in all the three scripts, in order to prepare a standard, published *Konkani Lipi Bodh* (Konkani Scripts Instructor) in 1960, but later on it stressed the need for everyone to learn Devanagari, irrespective of the script one used. The elite leadership found the political change in Goa favourable for such a move, as the Roman script users in general were in a cultural fix after the exit of Portuguese, though educated and enlightend section among them understood the benefits of liberation and democracy. They were promised by the Indian Prime Minister much before liberation that their language and culture would be preserved and protected (Kelekar, 1965) but this promise was later used by a small section for its own advantage through its language organisation. The issue of script remained dormant for some time in the face of larger issues such as regional autonomy and was later forced to silence under the cover of consensus. But while the users of scripts other than Nagari produced literature their socio-cultural self-representation suffered due to script related policy of the leaders. Script and language acquired the role of social and political levers under the Goan leadership.

#### SOCIO-POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES

Konkani as a national language placed in the Indian Constitution, got its recognition conditioned by the element of script, which acts as a socio-cultural qualification and a political provision. Looking at script from these perspectives, the concepts and practices of nationalism, pluralism and federalism draw our attention.

The 'national' identity that Konkani strove for was to give the sense of equity to the language community. It also entailed the provision of equality of opportunity for the community. While the 'national' character acquired by the language was based on the so-called 'national' script, this script-linked recognition held the other scripts in use for Konkani 'un-national' or 'less national' and certainly not qualified to be 'as national as' Devanagari. This sounds strange, especially when viewed in the context of constitutional recognition to English as *lingua franca* or Kannada as a national language and thereby its Roman or Kannada scripts as nationally recognised, shared and widely used scripts. When the protagonists of Konkani were branded 'anti-national', its Roman script was certainly a major factor. The critics of Konkani also looked at the 'alien' hand that cradled the speech for giving it the status of language. In the extreme analysis, Konkani became 'anti-national' in their eyes, because a section of its speakers opposed 'nationalist' elements in Goa, during its liberation struggle; and worst, a few among these pro-Konkani elements considered themselves citizens of the Portuguese colonial state. All these arguments, formulated in the philosophy of nationalism have not lost their relevance even after the national recognition to the language, because the basis of the argument is indirectly maintained, if not admitted, in the script provisions under the constitutional recognition. This is the instance of categorising the unwanted and sanitising it by the use of the 'national' myth. Which Konkani and whose Konkani is this national language is the question leading to the changing politics of recognition which is in the process of evolution.

Pluralism pervades our social and political life as the Indian nation. In the context of languages and scripts the Indian situation is unique. There have been attempts at enscripting the tribal speeches and many of these have been given the Roman script by Christian missionaries in the course of their religious activities. Gandhi wanted Hindustani to be written in both the scripts – Devanagari and Arabic. On the other hand Vinoba insisted on adoption of Devanagari not only for all the Indian languages but also for South Asian languages. While during the nationalist movement, Devanagari was given a boost as the common script through the propagation of Hindi, in the few years before independence, scholars were seeing ‘Romanization as the vital point in the solution of the main linguistic problem of India’ (Chatterji, 1943). But in the course of linguistic reorganisation of states, Hindi speaking areas were untouched. Following the passage of the OL Act of 1963 by the Indian parliament the Union Government in its attempt to resolve the issue of writing the minor and tribal languages, appointed a committee through its Central Hindi Directorate which had its Section for Developing Languages. The Committee under the leadership of Dr. Baburam Saxena recommended Devanagari script for writing all the minor and tribal languages in India which also included Konkani (Interview – Madhav Pandit, a member of the Committee). Plurality of languages in India is complicated by plurality of scripts in respect of some of them, such as Hindustani (written in Persian, Arabic, Devanagari, Roman), Sindhi (Perso-Arabic, Gurumukhi, Devanagari), Kashmiri (Persian, Arabic, Sarada, Devanagari and Roman), Maithili (Tirhutiya or Old Maithili and Devanagari), Newari (Old Newari and Devanagari), Manipuri (Bengali, Assamese, Old Manipuri or Meitei,

and Devanagari), Santali (Bengali, Oriya, Devanagari and Ol-chiki based on the Roman) and Mundari (Roman and Devanagari). In many of these, the assimilationist attempt is seen either through Roman or through Devanagari (Chatterji, 1974).

In the case of Konkani its plural character is evident in script and literary expression. Literature as a reflection of history brings out different images in the socio-cultural evolution of a community<sup>48</sup>. The same is true for Goan Catholics and Hindus, whose cultural experiences under the two faiths, economic and social issues involved in their development as a community and even geo-political perspectives vary. The churches and crosses mean different things to these two different groups. Dreams and aspirations, values and visions they have acquired through their religious, cultural expressions and experiences also differ. In the movement aiming to create a Konkani community these variations and perceptions ought to be accommodated as a common heritage. This was possible by treating each script and its literature on par with others, before these cultural complexities got integrated into a single common vision. But with decisions and actions to 'fast forward' the formation of the language identity these plural elements were ignored and planned standardisation was given a go bye.

When Konkani was projected as a common inheritance and proposed for the official status in Goa, its importance in the scheme of state formation was understood. Imaging of Konkani community by its migration and associating Konkani language with its consolidation would also imply planning for

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<sup>48</sup> . Mangalore Catholics have their history of captivity by Tipu Sultan in 1799 and the consequent sufferings during the period as the major event in their social history, but it has little impact on the Goan Konkani reader, or even on Hindus among the Mangalore Konkani.

unification of these scattered groups in the contiguous territory as far as possible in the Konkani state. That would make the logic of language as the foundation of state in the federal scheme more convincing. But while Konkani was promoted as a political symbol, no claims or appeals for inclusion in the proposed Konkani state were welcome by the language leaders by and large. The dream of Konkani state had lost its relevance after the formation of Maharashtra and during the discussions on *Vishal Gomantak* leaders would avoid speaking of the neighbouring Konkani territories. While all the claims of Goa were based on some old geographical features such as rivers and forts now in the neighbouring states, getting them back into Goan borders as Konkani lands has never occurred to Konkani leaders. In terms of scripts, a large section of these Konkanis across the Goan borders have a tradition of Devanagari, in spite of which Goa has not thought of any change in its territory. Where language has worked to the advantage of a small regional group, language leaders have managed to retain the advantage to a still smaller circle through the script factor. In federal set up the sharing of constitutional authority in the name of state language is cornered through the element of script.

As the movement in the name of language has reached its political target of having a state for Konkani – the *Konkani Rashtra* that Shennai Goembab visualised, it has also brought up the issues of greater import – What does a language mean to its users who have limited access to it? How do people and communities view language in their identity formation? What is the role played by script in this process? Why and how does a script gain significance and what is

its cultural function? Does script have social and political functions? A look at the interrelationship of script with language, culture and identity can help.

### SCRIPT, LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND IDENTITY

Language as a cultural tool gives its speakers a sense of community. As a group, they share it - viewing its literary productions and verbal treasures as their cultural assets. They also manage it and contribute to it in their own way. As language users, their degree of participation in communicative transactions and creative applications of language, in modern organised socio-political structures, are determined by their ability to master the elements of alphabet or writing system and the related skills. For a language having the history of different writing systems in use it is more challenging for different groups of users to share the linguistic wealth equitably. As one's socialisation and education are central to the process of acquiring knowledge of language and script, there are restrictions to the variety of scripts and languages one can master and use with reasonable efficiency. For a language community to be coherent, it has to be located in a contiguous territory and live there for long time. In the absence of this the feeling of language community is difficult to develop. In modern times learning a language means mastering its application for formal communicative functions in writing, which involves the element of script. In this way script acts as a constituent element of culture.

Culture as a way of life includes both material and non-material aspects and any changes effected in these aspects from outside the community without

adequate preparations are viewed as an attack on culture. Script comes under both the domains. As a system of symbols that constitute language, script is essentially a mental construct, a scheme of encasing a language and a means of comprehending the contents of language. Its association with religious scriptures, generally located in antiquity in case of major religions, provides it with spiritual powers and as an asset acquired in the stage of early socialisation it attracts sentimental attachment of the individual. As an element of material culture, script has its impact through the school books, religious text material, and a plethora of applications in communication that shape one's social and cultural life. It has significance even in economic terms, as scripts act as tools of record-keeping, accounts and administration. Hence any alteration in the script arrangement of a community is sure to affect its sense of psychological security as well as material well-being. There are also some set ideas about the script use, transmitted through generations, which are identical to other cultural norms and practices. Many scripts are linked to certain languages which in their turn carry a cultural baggage. If this link is disrupted, some social effects are likely. That is the reason why language shift is relatively easy to effect. As one learns a language with its script any attempt to separate the two results in cultural dismemberment for those using the combination.

This multiple role of script in the life of an individual or a community also relates the element of script with personal and cultural identity. While one may be familiar with more than one script, and may be using them for different purposes, the script to be used at the most intimate or most personal level is certainly decided by the historical and socio-cultural background and experiences

of an individual or a community. Those who claim Devanagari as ‘the script’ of Konkani have their claim to the intellectual elite status in the traditional Hindu society. Those who use Kannada have their own cultural story that they want the script to reflect. The same is true of the Roman supporters. These regional and cultural identities are the products of their respective historical experiences, political life situations and economic demands. They divide the world of Konkani into smaller segments with their peculiar and distinctive socio-cultural views. This is the socio-political reality.

At the same time, one cannot isolate oneself and one’s community in the matter of script in the present context, because the modernising forces are strong and it is the ability, the aptitude, and the efficiency in communication with larger area and diverse settings that widen the scope of development of a language community. From this angle, the growing incidence of shift to English education (and obviously its Roman script), which is a common phenomenon in all the regions occupied by Konkani speakers and also a universal trend in the all India context, is a lesson for the community. This has received the attention of the established leadership of Konkani. In the name of *Vishwa Nagari* a modified Nagari-Roman system was proposed soon after the recognition of Konkani (*Jaag* – March 1977)<sup>49</sup>. But no further moves are seen in the later years. Modern technology has facilitated transliteration at a time when the language itself is being abandoned under the forces of globalisation. While the ‘Konkani identity through a particular script’ is being propagated and insisted upon, the language community as a whole is losing the internal grip.

There are organisations and celebrations in the name of Konkani but the public response to these has not remained what it used to be. The past few sessions of the *Konkani Parishad* and the *Sahitya Sammelan* have received lukewarm response of people, though some new groups have gained entry to Konkani. Over the past decade or so resentment has been growing within the Konkani literary groups which had its echoes in the two sessions of the *Parishad* at the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are moves to involve prominent figures in the cultural world of Konkani Catholics in the events identified with Hindu-led organisations but the impact is momentary and involvement of Catholics in such events has not shown any consistency. Recent national events such as *Sahitya Sammelan* at Margao in 1998, or *Konkani Sangeet Sammelan* in 2001 brought in the leading *tiatr* artists and singers to perform and participate but their involvement was merely symbolic as they acknowledged the recognition and appreciation received but had nothing more to offer in absence of any plan of action or cultural projects devised by the organisers. Presence of Remo as a cult figure at the state level *Goa Yuwa Mahotsav* in 2000 was an event that had little follow up in terms of cultural integration. Konkani was never projected as the regional identity, while as a cultural identity it was defined by language and further conditioned by script. Larger identity concerns never figured in the century-long struggle of Konkani.

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<sup>49</sup> . It was suggested that the entire writing of Konkani could be done using 21 letters of an 'international form of Devanagari alphabet', which could be used also for all the other Indian languages.

Search for Konkani identity has gained speed in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This period is also characterised by increasing organisational and formal interaction among the Konkani people spread over the narrow strip of western coastline of India. While there are efforts by regional Konkani groups to know and understand one another, there is also a feeling of deprivation and distancing developing between the groups. Goan Konkani leadership may want to expand the terrain of Goan identity through Konkani language (Interview – Gurunath Kelekar) but the condition of Devanagari is inbuilt into this image. There are Mangalore Konkani intellectuals who have something to share with Goan Catholic group not connected to Devanagari, but the bogey of Goanness as an attachment with Konkani is not acceptable to these scholars of Konkani (Interview – Dr. Rev. Pratap Naik). Those who question the monopoly of Devanagari and Goan varieties in Konkani look at the cultural past of the community for the elements of Mundari and other languages found in Konkani and also point to the wide ranging plurality in the social and cultural universe that tend to shape the future of Konkani (Madtha – Address , 1997). Non-resident Goans, especially Catholics settled all over the world, search for their identity in the socio-political history of the territory but limit their linguistic craving to some annual cultural presentations and the feasts of their village saints or village-wise football teams and tournaments. Hindus, largely the GSBs, look at Goa as the home of their family deities and ancestral homes and properties. Goan Hindu elites leading the local Konkani movement insist on Konkani (essentially defined by Devanagari script) as the symbol of Goan identity and look for opportunities to manage public institutions and organisations to attain this objective. Roman

Catholics living in Goa face the dilemma because their identity is being questioned without any regard to their self-perception as Indian citizens. In case of other groups of Konkani community outside Goa, the process of marginalisation in language matters has gained official acceptance, not only in their respective states of domicile but also by the Konkani state of Goa. Even those who have accepted Devanagari (e.g. those in Kerala) have their grievances of being neglected and ignored when it comes to benefits and advantages available for Konkani. Goan Hindus from lower castes have come to Konkani recently in a small number, and have started getting disillusioned with the dream of Konkani. Their leadership has been critical and resentful of the elitist hegemony. While constitutional provisions and federal system have created a fragmented language identity through the element of script, a larger cultural identity is still elusive.

## **CHAPTER IV: REGIONAL DYNAMICS OF LANGUAGE AND SCRIPT**

In a movement for the recognition of the status of a language the role of associations and organisations is very important as they decide the terms around which there is a mobilisation of people and resources, a dissemination of information with respect to the issues involved and a representation that is to be made to the state authorities. These associations and organizations decide the strategies that are to be adopted to resolve conflicts through negotiation, deliberation, and mediation. In the case of Konkani the movement grew through such a complex evolutionary interaction. The several language associations, in the different regions, had their own priorities and programmes which determined their activities and policies. These associations were surrounded by the regional language associations of the majority language in the region and were constrained by the state policies on language and culture of that region. The language policies of the Central Government and its agencies were also significant in deciding the choice of strategies to be adopted by the individual associations working for Konkani. Looking at the language environments, within which these associations are situated, their activities need to be studied, and their impact judged, in relation to the broad objectives of the Konkani movement. This will help in understanding the socio-cultural basis of their perceptions and the economic determinants of their priorities.

## REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF ASSOCIATIONS

The four regions of the Konkani movement viz. Kerala, Karnataka, Bombay and Goa have had a number of Konkani associations over the last century. Though the term Konkani associations refers simply to ‘language bodies’ it also refers to ‘formations of those coming from the Konkan’, or in a caste context to ‘caste formations’ as in the case of Kerala or Karnataka<sup>1</sup>. The social bases of these numerous associations are different with respect to caste, region and religion. There is also a variance in the way they look at the language and the benefits they feel they can derive from it. These in turn determine their strategies and policies. In terms of inter-regional and inter-associational communication, co-operation, and exchange, these specific perceptions and strategies are key factors.

In the regional distribution of Konkani organisations Goa has a special place because it is regarded as the original home of the language. The organising skills of Goans have led to a building up of organisations not only in Goa but also in other centres of the Konkani movement. Also many of these organisations have looked at their counterparts in Goa as models for programmes and activities. Even an organisation such as the Konkani *Parishad*, which was formed outside Goa and under non-Goan leadership, has ultimately come to be controlled by Goans.

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<sup>1</sup> . In Kerala the GSBs are called Konkani and this has helped the caste to derive certain constitutional benefits. In case of Karnataka, the use of the term ‘Konkani’ for specific caste people is made by its members settled in North America and have their associations named after Konkani. They use Konkani to distinguish themselves from others, including other immigrant Konkani speakers belonging to other regions like Goa, Maharashtra.

emotional attachment of Konkani speakers to Goa, strengthened by its historical ties to groups in the Konkani region, has lent a relative privilege to the Goan leadership of the Konkani movement. This is reflected in the prominence given to Goan literateurs and activists in the national level events of Konkani. The projection of Goa as the potential Konkani state in independent India soon after Indian independence has also accounted for this special position that Goans have acquired in the Konkani world.

In order to understand the regional dynamics of language and script it is convenient to look at the formation and functioning of associations and organisations in different pockets of Konkani speakers over the major part of the last century. In doing so it is also necessary to explore the relationship between different caste and community groups involved in the process. This is attempted in the present chapter. Starting with North Kanara, where the earliest organised effort to express solidarity based on language was seen, other regions such as the metropolis of Bombay, Kerala, South Kanara and Mangalore and finally Goa are discussed.

### **North Kanara: Opportunity Not Taken**

As regards the formation of organisations for Konkani, Karwar has had a special place with the earliest attempts being the setting up of the *Konkani Mandal* and *Konkani Parishad* in the 1930s. The leadership of these organisations was essentially with the Saraswat community with persons such as Adv. Shanbhag and Adv. Kamath being in the forefront. The need for a separate

language identity was felt when the movement for *Samyukta Karnataka* started with emphasis on Kannada and also the *Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad* of Marathi tried to resist the moves to ensure separate recording of Konkani speakers in the decennial census. Mention is often made of derogatory and insulting remarks against Konkani by some speakers in a meeting organised for highlighting the cause of Kannada, which prompted these leaders to mobilise the force for Konkani (Sunaparant, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2002) and some Marathi conference in 1938 having ridiculed Konkani (Prabhu, 1989). Association of Konkani language leaders with the Congress helped them to rope in the Congressmen and also to organise the event such as the first *Konkani Parishad* on the lines of the Congress session (K.N.Rao, quoted in *Prabhu*, 1988). The involvement of Goans in the first *Parishad* (1939) was negligible, as can be seen from the list of organising committee members (Souvenir, *Parishad Golden Jubilee*, 1989). The only Goan name is that of Krishnabai Panajikar, who, by one account, belonged to Dharwar.

With emigration of Kanara Saraswats to Bombay on a large scale over the century, and also with the spread of education in Marathi under the Bombay state, followed by the Kannada medium in the present Karnataka, Konkani was left without any support. The early leadership of Konkani was predominantly given by Saraswats/ GSBs who also had their links with Bombay, which was the expanding industrial-economic centre and potential destination for migration. In the period following the creation of Mysore (now Karnataka) state in 1956 *Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti* fought elections demanding the inclusion of some border area mainly from Karwar, Kolhapur and Belgaum districts (along with Belgaum town) in Maharashtra, till the last decade of the twentieth century. The

work of Konkani got some boost in Karwar again after the language became the Official Language of Goa but the interests of Konkani workers lay in certain facilities and reservations in professional educational institutions which found voice on the *Parishad* platform<sup>2</sup>. It is interesting to note that the votaries of Konkani in Karwar today are from the Konkani Maratha community (not the GSBs as before) known for its strong pro-Maharashtra leanings under the erstwhile *Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti*. Senior activists of Konkani in this community look at Saraswats as exploiters. In several interviews prominent leaders of the Konkani Maratha community expressed this view but requested not to be quoted. After the lost battle of 'Ekikaran' (unification with Maharashtra) their love for Konkani remains a ploy to distinguish themselves from Kannadigas, who have been systematically 'settled' in the region by the state government to 'Kannadise' the administration and education as per the state language policy. The work of Konkani is seen as 'unremunerative'<sup>3</sup> and the enthusiasm is limited to seeking representation in the state body such as *Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy* for one's caste, as has been the practice so far<sup>4</sup>. The region which was considered as the birthplace of Konkani identity has no place for Konkani in

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<sup>2</sup> .In Sirsi Session of the *Parishad* a resolution demanding the reservation of seats in professional colleges in Goa for Konkani speakers in Karwar and the surrounding area of Konkani speakers was rejected by Goan delegates saying that the Karwar people had already got into Goan administration and other fields in a major way and had all the facilities even without any express arrangement.

<sup>3</sup> . President of *Konkani Sanskriti Kendra* (Karwar) feels that no one finds Konkani of any benefit and no one wants to work for the language as an obligation. Same view is expressed by Titus Noronha of Mangalore.

<sup>4</sup> . The *Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy* has members representing different castes and communities of Konkani speakers such as GSBs, Gaudas, Siddis, Kharvis etc. Karwar, Kumta, Ankola, Sirsi region normally gets one seat in the state body. In one instance, the member was considered on the basis of work for Konkani language and culture, but the move was resisted, saying that the body had no representative of goldsmith community in the new set-up.

education or government communication, though Konkani speakers form a community that is eligible for recognition as a Linguistic Minority under the relevant provisions (Mallaya, 1997 p.140). The schools in Marathi medium have been closed down for want of students, as a result of effective implementation of Official Language policy by the Karnataka state government, but no one has even thought of Konkani to replace Marathi. The local station of All India Radio could have got Konkani as its language of broadcasts on the basis of the language population of 78 % in Karwar Taluk (Mallaya, 1997: 140) but in spite of guidance and suggestions from Goan leaders there was no forceful demand to that effect, nor was there a conscious effort to see that the basis for such provision - census returns - recorded Konkani as the spoken language/ mother-tongue in genuine cases (Interview- Pundalik Naik). Other places like Kumta, Sirsi, Ankola have their local Konkani groups working for Konkani. But their activities remain sporadic and symbolic, mostly cultural and creative. Most of them have been restricted to the caste/community circles and in some cases they centre around individuals. *Akhil Karnataka Konkani Parishad* was formed in 1991 to work as a state body as there was a section which felt that *Konkani Bhasha Mandal Karnataka* (Regd.) operating from Mangalore was merely a local association and had no state jurisdiction. But the *Parishad* which planned to have bodies at Taluk level in places where Konkani speakers were in sizable number, did not do much, because, according to its President Arun Ubhaykar, 'Konkani movement has not taken deep root in Karnataka' (letter dtd. 10.6.1998). As a state body, the *Parishad* aimed at affiliating all the Konkani associations in the state but by 1998 only a dozen had joined it and the equal number 'were hesitant to join for some

reason or the other'. *Uttara Kannada Zilla Konkani Sahitya Parishad* of Sirsi was formed in 1989 as a district body and was largely patronised by V.S.Sonde whose role in the Konkani movement in the region is recognised by all. These and other local organisations of Konkani were formed at the initiative of certain individuals but remained dormant after the initial spurt of a few public functions like get-togethers, seminars, drama festivals and competitions etc. They also forwarded some demands to the state government or other agencies such as the Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities (Interview – V.S.Sonde) but neither followed them up with any persistence nor had they any consistent literary activity or mass movement for the language which was aimed at urging the authorities to act towards providing facilities, concessions, or privileges to the language community. The role of South Kanara in contrast is relatively more prominent for various reasons which I shall discuss a little later.

In North Kanara in spite of having the sizable population of Konkani speakers there was no good leadership after independence. In the linguistic reorganisation this region in the Bombay state was claimed by Maharashtra and the Konkan Maratha community which has a large population supported the claim. The GSBs who had land ownership and revenue rights in the region had lost their influence over the years because of large scale migration to Bombay and loss of economic hold after the implementation of the Land Reforms in the early 1960s. For three decades after 1960 the *Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti* was working for including this region in Maharashtra. Karnataka government adopted the policy of gradual 'Kannadisation' of the region and the strength of Konkani suffered. By 1980s the Official Language Policy of the Karnataka state

the policy of gradual 'Kannadisation' of the region and the strength of Konkani suffered. By 1980s the Official Language Policy of the Karnataka state government started showing its results and Konkani voice weakened. In the changed scenario Konkani language leadership is with the Konkan Marathas who find little support for their work in the region. With developmental projects of the Union Government such as Kaiga Atomic Power plant or the Naval base 'Sea Bird' which is now underway the population profile of Karwar taluk has changed. Konkani has lost its relevance in the wider political and cultural scenario.

### **Metropolitan Problems**

If North Kanara has remained relatively silent in the last quarter of the twentieth century on the language front, Bombay too - as the major centre of Konkani movement in its formative years - has little of organised language activity for Konkani. The first *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* as a permanent body was formed there in 1942 with ambitious plans. Its role in organising the *Parishad* in the crucial years before and after the Indian independence and in giving direction to the movement is indisputable. But the post-1960 period has seen the activities shifting to Goa leaving the KBM in Bombay less active. In the early years of Indian independence, this pioneer institution of Konkani movement worked towards the introduction of Konkani in education by announcing plans for the preparation of text-books for school children, the creation of awareness through its quarterly magazine '*Saad*', the popularisation of the language by organising different types of contests, competitions, festivals etc. But the large number of Konkani organizations formed by the regional Konkani groups in the metropolis

specially after the formation of the Maharashtra state. In 1967 the Mandal celebrated its silver jubilee to coincide with the ninth *Parishad* but after this event, the Mandal remained as one of the many organizations of Konkani people rather than the torch-bearer and pioneer that it set out to be. Its office bearers changed but nothing much changed in terms of its activities and functions. The two sessions of the *Parishad* held after the Sahitya Akademi recognition (1975) – 13<sup>th</sup> in 1980 and 21<sup>st</sup> in 1997 – could not bring people closer<sup>5</sup> and were marked by criticism and dissatisfaction over the organisation and policy issues<sup>6</sup>. Though the Mandal had the same person as its Secretary for nearly four decades<sup>7</sup>, the official records are not available (Moraes in *Vishwa Konkani*, 1995). Konkani writers and activists hailing from different regions held positions in the Mandal but the regional groups remained scattered and the Mandal could not present a unified image of Konkani people in the metropolis. Most of the other organisations were formed and run by regional or community groups such as the Chitrapur Saraswats, Mangalorean Catholics, Goan Catholics and the like<sup>8</sup>. Even the KBM did not go beyond the routine of organising anniversaries, condolence

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5. The 13<sup>th</sup> session was not able to attract Konkani speakers from the metropolis itself as the organisers failed to reach them. Presidential address at the VII *Lekhak Sammelan* in 1983 took note of this lacuna. (*Sammelan Souvenir*). The attendance as well as arrangements for the delegates of this session were poor.

6. The office-bearer and Ex-President of the *Parishad* Uday Bhembre in his editorial of Konkani Daily *Sunaparant* (20<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1997) pointed out a number of defects in organisation. In the 21<sup>st</sup> session in 1997, the issue of plural identity of Konkani formed a part of the Presidential address by Dr. Madtha, which was against the basic understanding of the *Parishad* on the script issue and was criticised by another office-bearer of the *Parishad* and the *Sahitya Sammelan* President Nagesh Karmali (*Sunaparant* —<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1997).

7. Mr. F.J. Martyres was one of the Joint Secretaries in the early years of the *Mandal* and he took up the post of Secretary of the Working Committee thereafter to continue till mid-eighties, according to official report by J.B. Moraes in *Vishwa Konkani*, 1995. At the time of Silver Jubilee celebrations of the *Mandal* in 1967 Martyres was the Honorary General Secretary of the Organising Committee: but no details regarding the membership profile, or the past functionaries/ office bearers, finance or such other aspects of the *Mandal* are seen in the souvenir released on this occasion, nor are any records available for reference.

8. There have been organisations like *The Konkani Cultural Association*, *Goan Cultural Association*, *Konkani Sabha* (Mulund), *Konkani Kalzam*, *Konkani Kala Kusum*, *Vasai Konkani Kendra*, *Konkani Seva Sangh*, but many of them have specific regional and community membership. Quite a few of them are attached to local church/ parish and language activities are only a part of their aims.

the KBM did not go beyond the routine of organising anniversaries, condolence and felicitation meetings. In terms of planning, propagation of language and pressurising the government on policy issues, it did not make any efforts. Neither did the mobilisation nor the integration of Konkani speakers receive any attention. Leadership of the *Mandal* remained with individuals belonging to regional groups in Karnataka and, activities got limited response from the specific regional and community groups, depending on the community to which leadership belonged. The larger picture of Konkani people never emerged through the *Mandal* or its programmes. Issues like the scope for Konkani as a medium of school education, the recognition of Konkani speakers as a linguistic minority, the place for the language in mass medium of Radio were highlighted in the early 1950s but were not pressed further after Goa's liberation. An increasing number of Konkani speakers, who made this state capital their home, took to Marathi over the years (Sardesai in *Jaag* – Dec. '99)<sup>9</sup>. As the active Goan GSB youth who were the main force of the Konkani movement in the metropolis, shifted to Goa after liberation, the activities of the *Mandal* were affected. Goans were divided over the political future of their homeland, whereas the Konkani speakers from the other regions had made Bombay their second home. For Goans settled in Mumbai, Marathi becomes their social, cultural medium of communication and contacts.

### **Kerala – Caste Contests**

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*Sangh*, but many of them have specific regional and community membership. Quite a few of them are attached to local church/ parish and language activities are only a part of their aims.

9. Ms. Sardesai observes that Konkani speakers settled in Mumbai start speaking Konkani mixed with Marathi words and within a generation or two Marathi replaces Konkani. This is seen in case of large number of Goans whose families are now Mumbaitees more than Goan. Marathi gives them security and sense of identity necessary in day-to-day social life within the locality.

Kerala clearly exhibits a caste link of language movement. The first collective resolve for preservation and improvement of the mother-tongue was made in a meeting of the Gowd Saraswats in Alapuzza in 1924 which is considered as the beginning of the Konkani movement in Kerala (Prabhu, 1996). All the later efforts have been through the local groups and associations of the GSBs and closely linked to their temples. The initiative and consistent follow up on the issues related to Konkani by Mr. N. Purushothama Mallaya for almost three decades starting from 1950s have been well recognised and acknowledged by all Konkani lovers in Kerala and outside. But the basis of all these efforts is only partly linguistic. The thrust is on the caste and community, particularly in the recognised organisational efforts.

In Kerala the major organisations formed in the name of Konkani are *Konkani Bhasha Prachar Sabha* (estd.1966), *Konkani Premi Mandal* (estd. 1960s), *Konkani Language Institute* (estd. 1975), and *Kerala Konkani Academy* (estd. 1980). *Konkani Vidyapeeth*, *Konkani Sahitya Samaj*, *Saraswat Youth Association* are other organisations engaged in publication and cultural activities. Among all these, the Sabha has made its mark as the pioneer body of Konkani in the state. The organisation is controlled by Mr. N. P. Mallaya who has managed to keep the membership restricted to the GSB caste members. His writings on Konkani have been published in the national and regional press since mid-1950s. To him, Konkani in Kerala means GSBs and the name 'lingua Bramanica', he feels, is clearly indicative of the caste basis of this language (Interview-N.P.Mallaya). Among others, *Konkani Premi Mandal* was established by a Vaishya V. Shet Balaraj who had a limited influence because of the rigid caste

*Language Institute* came into being in 1975 as a reaction to the autocratic functioning of the Sabha, 'where the merit and work', even of the caste members, 'was sidelined'. The Institute is established and controlled by a GSB Mr. R.K.Rao who is critical of the Sabha and of Mr. Mallaya for neglecting the task of 'Prachar' i.e. propagation of the 'Bhasha' – language (Konkani) which is the prime function of the Sabha, as suggested in the name of the Sabha. Mr. Rao also felt that the Sabha was a 'one man show'. In fact, a book written by Prof. Rao was handed over to Mr. Mallaya to publish through the Sabha but it remained unpublished for over a year. *Konkani Bhasha Mandal Goa* was also approached with the same proposal but the then President of the Mandal Mr. Chandrakant Keni expressed his inability to oblige. This prompted Prof. Rao to publish the book on his own for which the Institute was born (Interview – Prof. R.K.Rao). *Kerala Konkani Academy* was formed as an alternative to the Sabha and is more 'open' in terms of membership. The initiative for the formation of the Academy was taken by Mr. R.K.Rao and Mr. P.G. Kamath but the members came from all the Konkani speaking castes. The Sabha, however, stood by its stand, that 'all efforts towards promotion of Konkani art and culture should go under the banner of Konkani Bhasha Prachar Sabha and should not lead to formation of parallel organisations with similar objects and aims which may hamper the progress of the Konkani language' ('*Konkani Vikas*' August 1979). The basis for such a stand was, perhaps, the claim by Mr. Mallaya for acknowledgement of the crusading work done by himself and his organization in getting for Konkani all the desirable official recognition and due honour as a language. There are others e.g. Adv. H.B.Shenoy who have worked for the Konkani cause, who provided

official recognition and due honour as a language. There are others e.g. Adv. H.B.Shenoy who have worked for the Konkani cause, who provided administrative and legal support, but there is no mention of their efforts in the recorded accounts of the work published by the *Sabha* and by Mr. Mallaya. There are publications on the background and history of the Konkani movement in Kerala, published mostly by the *Sabha*, all crediting Mr. Mallaya for all the achievements of Konkani. Going by his views, and looking at the composition or functioning of the *Sabha*, the caste appears to be a major factor in its stand on language and culture.

The GSBs have struggled to gain the Brahmin status in the face of strong divide between them and the local Namboodiri or Tamil Brahmins. In their attempt to prove their superiority they have stressed on their Aryan and North Indian origin as a branch of the *Pancha Gowdas*. The role of caste members as diplomats, interpreters, intellectuals and scholars in the past is also highlighted in an attempt to establish the rich history of the community (Mallaya, 1994). The historical evidence of hostility between the local Brahmins and these immigrants is found in the chronicles of foreign travellers and western writers (Valavalikar, 1928). The GSB moves for consolidation in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century helped these local GSBs to assert themselves as a caste group whose intellectuals worked for the recognition of the status to their community in the socio-cultural life of the region. Their economic activities in the region provided the resource base and academic pursuits of some of the community members such as A. D. Hari Sharma who brought the community a sense of pride. The movement for spread and popularisation of Hindi as national language provided scope to some

and sided with Devanagari to establish the separate identity<sup>10</sup>. Malayalee society as a whole had little social or cultural interaction with this community and there is still a feeling that the Konkanies 'do not identify themselves with the land (Kerala)'<sup>11</sup>. All along, the *Konkani*es have looked at Goa as their homeland and the GSBs, who have their family deities in Goa, have created a centre '*Sasashti Parambil*' to house the temples of their *Kuladevatas* (family deities), in the memory of their homeland *Sasashti*(Salsette) in Goa from where they claim to have migrated (Valavalikar, 1928: 130).

While the role of a GSB such as Mr. Mallaya in promoting Konkani is recognised, the basis of all his work is not linguistic or academic, as already mentioned. The language is looked as a tool of 'their' Konkani culture which is distinguished from that of others speaking the language. In all his efforts to preserve and promote the language and seek governmental support and privileges, Mr. Mallaya is said to have used the caste temple (Tirumala Devaswom at Kochi) and the spiritual leadership of the Swami of Kashi Math in every possible way. The inauguration of the *Konkani Bhasha Prachar Sabha*, '*Bhoomi Poojan*' for the building and also the inauguration of the *Konkani Bhasha Bhavan*, 'the first and

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<sup>10</sup> . The leaders in the forefront of literary and organisational activities of Kerala Konkani groups have been closely associated with the work of Hindi. Mr. N.Purushothama Mallaya of *Konkani Bhasha Prachar Sabha* was involved in the work of Hindi, Prof. R.K.Rao of *Konkani Language Institute* was a college teacher teaching Hindi, Shri. P.G.Kamath, ex-President of *Kerala Konkani Academy* was the Hindi Officer in the Education Department in Government Of Kerala.

<sup>11</sup> . Mr. K.L.Mohana Varma, a renowned Malayalam literateur and ex-secretary of Kerala State Sahitya Akademi made this comment in a discussion with a group of Goan Konkani writers in a meeting of *Kochi Sahitya Vedi* (the organisation of writers involved in literary activities in Malayalam and other languages in Kerala) in 1999. According to him, the regional literature depicts the community through characters that are targets of mockery and ridicule and no significance in socio-cultural milieu. This also shows the degree of distancing and lack of interaction with the native community.

only *Bhavan* for Konkani in India'<sup>12</sup> (Mallaya, 1994: 34) was performed at the hands of the *Swami*.

This attitude of casting the Konkani in the caste mould has made non-GSBs more skeptical. Their sense of alienation and feeling of being neglected was expressed before the 16<sup>th</sup> session of *Akhil Bharatiya Konkani Sahitya Parishad* held in Kerala under the Presidentship of Adv. Uday Bhembre. The non-GSB sections of Konkani speakers sent a representation with signatures of Vaishyas, Kudumbis, Saraswats (*Kalavants*) addressed to the *Parishad* President, informing about the local GSBs ignoring them in the work of Konkani. The *Parishad* President Adv. Uday Bhembre informed them telegraphically that Konkani belonged to all. The *Vaishya Youth Association* activists were then called 'at the last minute' to work as volunteers in the session of the *Parishad* and they did the job (Interview – R.S.Bhaskar). The caste hegemony is attempted to be maintained through the official and individual decisions and actions under the leadership of Mr. Mallaya. The presentation of cultural programmes, folk songs etc. by Konkani speaking people in Kerala on All India Radio were started with the initiative of the *Sabha*, but the *Sabha* raised objections when some other group/organisation of Konkani speakers presented a similar programme, and even questioned the authenticity of the programme in its communication with the officials of All India Radio (Interview – Shivanand Shennai). Similar attitude was also shown in the matter of representation to Konkani linguistic minority on the local and District Boards and Committees under the various Departments of the

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<sup>12</sup> . The second *Konkani Bhavan* has since come up in Margao-Goa in the last decade. For almost two decades the *Sabha Bhavan* was the only *Konkani Bhavan* in India. Besides the name there is little (that concerns the language) to mention about the contribution of the *Bhavan*.

state government. Within the educational institutions run by the Tirumala Devaswom management Konkani was introduced as a language but it was kept a 'limited affair' by controlling the training of teachers then serving the school and getting the training course recognised by the government. Similar training was not made available to any other aspirant, nor was any other individual or institution working for Konkani involved in this project. No attempt was made to make arrangements to increase the number of schools or number of trained teachers under the facility of provision of teaching Konkani. Whether it is language organisation, educational institution, constitutional provision for minority representation, activity of publication or movement for language recognition, Konkani speakers in general and even those among GSBs who are working for Konkani affirm that the caste interests and to some extent even personal and family interests have been central to the so-called linguistic concerns of the *Sabha* and its leadership (Interview – Adv. H.B.Shenoy).

This is also clear from certain responses and reactions seen from the groups and individuals who were denied access to the work and benefits of Konkani. As the membership of the *Sabha* was limited and decided at the 'discretion' of 'specific individuals' new organisations were formed. Books were published and circulated through different organisations. Cultural programmes were presented on different occasions by these new organisations. Membership of different bodies of the Central Sahitya Akademi was offered to some of the prominent active members of these organisations. Some received awards for their literary

and translation works<sup>13</sup>. Language examinations were planned and conducted by *Konkani Sahitya Samaj* under the leadership of K.K.Subramanyam, a retired Hindi teacher from the Kudumbi community, for propagation and popularisation of Konkani for the benefit of those Konkani speakers who had lost touch with their own language. As a result of all this, the Konkani language community in Kerala came to be better known to the language community in other regions through many others who were active and concerned about their language. Although they had not found opportunity or exposure to gain recognition because of narrow and distorted approach towards the cause of the language on the part of the leadership, they continued to work for the language often against the wishes of this established leadership.

The use of similarity in name – *Konkani* – by the GSB community in Kerala for getting the benefits under the provisions of the Constitution has continued to be a matter of apprehension and antipathy on the part of other castes and communities. GSBs have managed to get their temples, schools and other institutions out of the governmental administrative restrictions and controls by getting them declared as the minority institutions and attracting security and privileges under the Articles 29 and 30 of the Indian constitution. The caste concerns among other castes of Konkani speakers have taken different forms. The depressed caste of Konkani Kudumbis was traditionally tied to Konkanis i.e. GSBs but with the political and social reforms introduced in Kerala over the twentieth century they have got themselves freed from the bondage-like

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dependence on GSBs and have received certain benefits under the land reforms introduced by the Communist-dominated state government in the past. Their efforts to secure certain constitutional concessions as Backward Caste have led to their mobilisation under the *Kerala Kudumbi Sangham* and the spread of education, attempt at awareness creation, employment and career training, eradication of social evils such as child marriage, polygamy etc. are the major areas of thrust. They have managed to get only a limited success in getting concessions in education<sup>14</sup>.

Another most disadvantaged caste among Konkani speakers is that of the ‘*kalavants*’ attached to the temples and their managers i.e. GSBs. Always being ill-treated and humiliated by the GSBs as ‘*chedyanche*’ (children of the concubines), deprived of any scope for building self-esteem and self-respect due to lack of education and employment till the first half of the twentieth century, the caste woke up to the demands of the new era and introduced marriage and family among the girls and boys in the community, acquiring education and strength of association. In order to come out of the clutches of the upper caste GSBs they severed the links with the traditional ‘patrons’ and ‘benefactors’ but acquired the caste name of ‘saraswats’ to establish the link they had through the serving women. In spite of the strong opposition of the GSBs the caste leaders managed to win the legal battle to claim the caste name of ‘non-Brahmin Saraswats’ paving the way to get the benefits that are due to disadvantaged classes and castes (Interview – P.Manohar). The language became a major loser as these castes in

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<sup>14</sup> . According to the President of the *Sangham*, they have been striving since 1960s to get the status of backward caste/ scheduled caste, which has eluded them. They receive benefits in the form of OEC which relate to certain quota for admissions to undergraduate courses.

their attempt to distance themselves from the so called official authentic 'Konkani' community i.e. GSBs, tried to use regional language increasingly - for the livelihood and socio-economic interaction – at the cost of their own ancestral language. GSBs as the caste elite had the advantages also as the language elite. Moreover, the regional script – Malayalam – that was in use for writing Konkani among all the sections of Konkani speakers in Kerala (though majority of these users belonged to GSBs) was replaced by Devanagari, which factor made Konkani difficult to learn for the people who had lost touch with the language. GSBs had an advantage here because of their strong religious and ritual frame associated with Sanskrit and even Marathi. For their internal communication they still use Malayalam script as can be seen in journals like '*Saraswata Vani*' and '*Vaishnava Ratna*' but take pride in Devanagari as it provides them a position of prestige as well as direct access to larger Konkani area of Goa controlled largely by their caste group leading the language and literary scene and also organisational and institutional field. This will be discussed later. More importantly, adoption of Devanagari gives them a sense of freedom from, and equality with, the regional language group of Malayalee speakers whose traditional view of Konkani is that of a dialect, a backward language with no script, a sort of speech variety surviving by the grace of the local script which is rightfully and essentially theirs. This sense of language prestige is clearly more evident in the elite group of GSBs who have economic stability as trader and business community and not so much for other caste groups of Konkani language community whose socio-economic well-being is intimately linked to their use of

regional language at one level and to the modernising trend of English and Hindi at the other.

In their bid to appropriate the folk tradition of Konkani, the GSBs have tried to publish certain material in Devanagari alone (*Godde Ramayana* by R. K. Rao) or with Malayalam (*Shravonn* by P.G.Kamath) but the castes to which the lyrics are supposed to belong viz. Vaishyas/ Vaniyas and Kudumbis respectively question the propriety and authority of the GSBs in this respect. This is done more out of caste hatred and feeling of loss than on the basis of academic authority or cultural concern. These groups have not been using the texts as in the past due to some difficulties, but the linkage of these oral texts with certain rituals of these castes is stressed, which forms the basis of protest against this 'plagiarism' of a sort. In a way, the text or the performance is not the significant part but the claim and the right over it is. The issue is of positional goods in society in the name of Konkani for which different groups are competing.

Kerala Konkani is at crossroads because the terms of control are not accepted any more by the new generation. The benefits are enjoyed by the elite so far and the elite leadership insists on status quo but with the new awakening and consolidation among other caste groups the language – caste bond will possibly be subjected to legal and juridical and also political scrutiny in the contest for sharing the fruits of constitutional safeguards and benefits in the processes of a competitive democracy. Adv. H. B. Shenoy, the ex-Secretary of the *Kerala Konkani Academy* is critical of the ways and means used by the *Sabha* leadership and of Mr. Mallaya in particular. He says he has already offered legal help to any one seeking admission to the courses in Konkani linguistic minority institutions

on the basis of genuine mother- tongue claims. *Sukritindra Oriental Research Institute* (SORI), a GSB institution, has co-opted R.S. Bhaskar, a non-GSB on its advisory committee (Interview-D.Nityanand Bhat, Director, SORI). The established caste/language leadership has been questioned in the past by the young activists from the GSBs on the issue of representation on the government bodies, committees and boards of the state government<sup>15</sup> (Interview – D. Shivanand Shennai).

The political economy landscape of Konkani in Kerala is thereby at the crossroads because of three issues: ( i ) inter-generational conflict, ( ii ) inter-factional competition, and ( iii ) disagreement on strategy to be adopted with respect to representation on government bodies.

### **South Kanara: The Real Battle-ground**

In Karnataka the organised Konkani language movement is seen mainly in Mangalore-Udupi area where the contesting groups within the movement are more defined and their respective activities more pronounced. The GSBs as a business community have limited practical utility for the language in terms of literature or culture. But their search for status is focused on ‘language as an asset’ to acquire certain political and administrative advantages. The GSBs in trade and business have supported the language activities mostly as their community work. Their contribution to academic or creative side of language is

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<sup>15</sup> . Payyanur Ramesh Pai who was active in the *Kerala Konkani Academy* had taken up the matter with the *Sabha* leader Mr. Mallaya and on the basis of the Govt. order related to the provision of representation to Konkani linguistic minority, but the enquiry did not proceed after the relevant papers were reported missing from the government files, according to D. Shivanand Shennai.

very limited as compared to that of the Catholics, who have worked both through the church and outside.

Organisations in the early part of the twentieth century were essentially community-based, giving a prominent role to the church and temples. The church service and liturgy were in Konkani. In this context creative writing in Konkani got a boost with the appearance of '*Konkani Dirvem*' but only among Catholics. The Catholic *Association of South Kanara* (CASK) and other organisations, guided by the missionaries, and the *Saraswat Associations*, connected to the GSB temples, worked for their respective communities making use of Konkani. In the year 1940 the second Konkani *Parishad* was held in Udupi (with the support of Dr.T. M. A. Pai) in which the participation of Catholics was ensured. Jerome Saldanha, the Member of Madras Legislature, who presided over the event, was not in favour of a single script as was resolved in the first conference. The first *Parishad* held in Karwar had included as one of its objectives – 'To use Devanagari, the original/ natural and national script for Konkani'. One of the resolutions adopted said that 'Devanagari script should be used for Konkani'. This emphasis on Devanagari has to be seen in the light of consolidation of Kannada forces through the *Samyukta Karnataka* movement of 1930s and ridicule suffered by the Konkani speaking children in Kannada schools which they had to attend. In the First *Parishad* Adv. Shanbhag mentioned that Hindi and Marathi were using the script of Sanskrit i.e. Devanagari, and the same was the script of Konkani (Prabhu, 1988) . In Karwar, which was under the Bombay state for long, this script was in use in Marathi education. But the second *Parishad* in Udupi was held in the Madras state and since a large number of Konkani users were

Catholics conversant with the Kannada script, it was understandable that the single script proposal was not supported there. The issue of script had to be underplayed in their second *Parishad* because of the opposition of the President himself. In this way, script symbolised the contesting claims of the GSBs and Catholics seen in the later years in the South Kanara. with regard to Konkani. The later sessions did not pass any express resolution on script for Konkani.

The period of two decades after the Udupi *Parishad* did not see much happening on the Konkani front in Karnataka, particularly in South Kanara, except for the publication of some periodicals which werestarted in Bombay and later shifted to Mangalore<sup>16</sup> (Moraes, 1995). It was only in the 1960s that the *Konkani Bhashoddhar Trust* was established at Udupi. The Manipal establishment was taking shape during this period and the Business House of Pais had started gaining prominence. In Mangalore, the work of Konkani was yet to start in organised manner. Some periodicals in Konkani were published from Bombay by the Mangalore Catholics. In the decade of 1960s a few of these writers and editors returned to Mangalore from Bombay and continued their journalistic activities. The organisational activities, however, started in 1970s, mainly with the tenth *Parishad* held in Panaji-Goa.

The major formations in the region were three:

- ( i ) The GSB community and its institutions led bythe Pais of Manipal,
- ( ii ) The Jesuits and their institutions,
- ( iii ) The Catholic writers with secular/leftist leanings.

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<sup>16</sup> . The Mangalorean writer J. S. Alvares started *Mitra* in 1953 and *Jhelo* in 1956, both in Bombay, which later continued to be published from Mangalore.

The first of these was roped in through the *Parishad* from its early years, as the 1940 *Parishad* in Udupi had Dr. T. M. A. Pai as the President of the Reception Committee. The GSB unification conference (limited to uniting the Smartas and Vaishnavas) held in Mangalore in the first decade of the twentieth century was followed by similar efforts at other places such as Belgaum (1909) and Goa (1910) to unite the different sects in the community. The later decades also witnessed a growing understanding between different *Maths* and their presiding *Swamis*. These *Swamis* kept in constant touch with their disciples and brought about a sense of confidence among all the sections. The Gowda Saraswat Associations in different towns in South Kanara formed a visible group of Konkani community. With access to education, economic stability through trade and business, involvement of some of their members in nationalist struggle through the Congress, the community got recognition. Attempts to bring in those left out of the Saraswat consolidation was continued in the decades following the independence and the formation of Mysore state<sup>17</sup> (Papers at Vishwa Saraswat Sammelan 1999). In their struggle to improve their economic conditions, these backward groups among Saraswats received help from the Pais of Manipal who had their strong banking network<sup>18</sup>. The involvement of this community in Konkani work was mainly through the Pais, Mr. K.K.Pai in particular.

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<sup>17</sup> . Rajapuri Saraswats, for example, were not given any importance till 1960s. In a tour of the *Kavale Math Swami*, the members of this community were given confidence to come together and interact with the other sects in South Kanara.

<sup>18</sup> . Till the time of nationalisation of banks in 1969 under Indira Gandhi regime, the two major banks – Syndicate Bank and Canara Bank were the leading ones in the South. A large number of officials and employees in these banks in those years were from this community. Even for the Rajapuri Saraswats, the House of Pais provided facilities in education and employment.

The Pais of Manipal had begun to build up their economic strength in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and their banking enterprises had expanded over the years, giving them a position in the community and especially in the *Matha* administration. For them this economic leadership had to be reinforced by cultural leadership, in which language worked as a tool. Their caste and community identity was of mutual benefit to their business and also to the community entrepreneurship. The Pais ventured into professional education and made it into a paying proposition. Banking provided employment to the community youth. These factors also added to the social prestige of the family and brought community leadership as well as recognition from the community institution i.e. *Matha*.

Involvement of the Pai family in the cultural affairs of the community led to their being supportive of the language movement. As the GSBs had to counter the hostility of the regional Brahmin groups such as Shivallis and also to consolidate the forces scattered in different states they worked towards promotion of Konkani language as their symbol of identity and Devanagari script as the distinct Aryan heritage to which they had a claim. This would also help in developing the distinct identity of the community. This is how the Pais came to extend their support to the Konkani movement started by the GSBs in North Kanara and to their script policy. Their views on script, however, were not clear, because, for them, Konkani as a language carried value which was more symbolic than real.

The role of Jesuits in the work of Konkani has a history of over a century in Mangalore. Fr. Angelus Francis Xavier Maffei not only brought awareness of

Konkani among the local Catholics but also studied the language in absence of any material, preparing the dictionary and grammar of Konkani in Kannada script. The use of Konkani in the church was popularised through the efforts of such priests. St. Aloysius College in Mangalore became a centre of activities for Konkani through the priests and teachers. The prime focus was, however, on religion and the idea of free thought and action outside the church domain was promptly curtailed<sup>19</sup>. The Jesuits have '*Raknno*' as 'the organ of the Diocese and of Catholic Action', which still has the identity crisis<sup>20</sup>. As the organ of the Diocese its main focus is the interest of Catholic community; concern for Konkani language is only incidental. There have been instances of pressures on the editor from the Bishop, not to publish certain material considering it as anti-establishment or misleading the people. It is the commitment and conviction of the individual editor that decides the scope for the promotion of the cause of Konkani in the *Raknno*. This is admitted by the three leading past editors viz. Msgr. Alexander D'Souza, Fr. Mark Valdar and Fr. Samuel Sequeira. Though projected as the leading Konkani periodical with the largest readership/circulation, *Raknno* has made provision for English and Kannada so as to cater to the changing demands of the laity (Interview – Msgr. Alexander D'Souza). Within the Diocese of Mangalore around sixty parishes out of 140 have their own journals, many of them in Konkani in Kannada script. Jesuits have

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<sup>19</sup> . The two early journals in Konkani had to stop publication because of wrath or displeasure of the church authorities. *Konkani Dirvem* could not continue for long though it shifted to Canara Press for printing after the Jesuit Kodialbail Press refused to print it. The controversy between *Dirvem* and *Raknno* finds mention in the issue of *Dirvem* dtd. 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec. 1938. Another journal '*Samajicho Divo*' was banned by the church as it propagated the socialist ideas. *Dirvem* issue dtd. 16<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1937 mentioned about Bishop's proclamation proscribing the journal.

continued to study the language and popularise it through literary and theatre activities. However, of late, there are public pressures to use more English in the church and some parishes have succumbed to them for economic considerations and ‘commercial compulsions’<sup>21</sup>, inviting criticism that ‘church has become the caterer’ (Interview – Eric Ozario). This is admitted by some priests working for Konkani. This group led by the church has a large following as many leading writers and artists among Catholics prefer to toe the line of the priests rather than antagonise them even on genuine counts.

The third group consists of writers, artists and activists whose commitment to language, literature and culture is based on their socialist ideas and concern for well-being of the masses. Their experience of cosmopolitan life and exposure to the industrial culture in Bombay led them to question the functioning and policies of the church. Late Charles Francis Da Costa (*Chafra* to the Konkani literary world), the first among Mangaloreans to receive the Sahitya Akademi literary award (1989)<sup>22</sup> tops the list of this group. Through his journals and his dramas, he criticized the church, supported the toiling masses and upheld the human values. Back in Mangalore he protested against the exploitation of workers in the church-run production centres and suffered displeasure of the

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<sup>20</sup> . *Raknno* has to balance between its role as the organ of the church and its commitment to Konkani, and much depends on the editor. If the editor is committed to Konkani, the journal can serve the cause of the language well. Some have done this but there have been some with no concern for language.

<sup>21</sup> . There are parishes where the attendance of parishioners has fallen because English is not used in masses. People have started attending English masses in other parishes. Baidoor parish which was Konkani has now become English.

<sup>22</sup> . Mr. J.B.Moraes received this award in 1985 before *Chafra*, but settled in Bombay. Moraes was considered as one from Bombay Konkani group. Though Mangaloreans consider Moraes as their man because he belongs to Mangalore and also because he writes in Kannada script, as the activist of Konkani he is closely associated with the KBM in Mumbai. By giving this award to him the attempt was made to pacify the Mangaloreans’ sentiments against the Goan and Devanagari monopoly, balance the communal and regional distribution of benefits, often seen in the organisation of the events and also in the selection of individuals to hold positions. But the award to *Chafra* was viewed as a genuine honour.

ecclesiastical authorities who arranged the boycott of *Chafra's* drama shows (Interview – Eric Ozario). *Chafra* as a poet and writer attracted the youth around him and built a brigade of writers and activists with a new outlook. This group could relate with Konkani activities irrespective of church dominance (Interview – Titus Noronha). Some of them found it worthwhile to associate with the GSB elements and moderates among the Jesuits.

The associational scenario of Konkani in Karnataka is characterised by the contesting roles of the first two groups to control centres of power. *Konkani Bhasha Mandal Karnataka (KBMK)*, *Akhil Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Parishad (AKKSP)* with its affiliates such as the *Uttara Kannada Zilla Konkani Sahitya Parishad (UKZKSP)*, and *Karnataka Konkani Sahitya AKademi (KKSA)* are seen as the arenas of this contest. KBMK as the veteran body with secular standing was formed in 1974. Goan Konkani leadership, particularly Chandrakant Keni was instrumental in ensuring the support of the GSBs in Mangalore in establishing this organisation which, according to Fr. Samuel Sequeira, was 'initiated by *Raknno*'. The role of K.K.Pai in ensuring the presence of GSBs in KBMK is recognised by those who have been office bearers for long. Financial support and collaboration with the Konkani organisations outside Karnataka in the past was made possible through the Manipal factor. While the Jesuits have their St. Aloysius College and Institute of Konkani for study and research along with *Raknno* for communication, GSBs look at the T. M. A. Pai Foundation and M. G. Pai Memorial Konkani Research Centre as their organisations. For communication GSBs have only *Panchakadayi* which has very meagre circulation within the community. KBMK has seen the two sides trying to gain control during

every election, sometimes settling for some member with no literary or cultural background, with limited business standing locally, and with low profile in social or literary activities to occupy the post of the President<sup>23</sup>. Jesuits have also worked to ensure that their representatives also make to the position. This they have done with the support of a large number of their writers, actors, priests. Fr. Mark Valdar, Dr. Edward Nazareth and others, who have contributed to literature have occupied the chair in the past. As a result of this continued contest some of those without much work for the language or literature have also become KBMK Presidents through arrangements with some office-bearers or as consensus candidates to satisfy both the communities<sup>24</sup>. With this the KBMK, after around twenty eight years of its formation, does not have a permanent office and no records or documents are available to study the growth and functioning of the organisation representing the largest numerical concentration of Konkani speakers<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> . Of the GSBs, Shri.K.K.Pai, V.Damodar Prabhu and Basti Vaman Shenoy have been the three prominent Presidents. A writer, editor like B.V.Baliga has never occupied the post. In the Silver Jubilee official function of KBMK his name was mentioned as one of the ex-presidents and was duly questioned from the audience. Name of Leo D'souza, one of the former Presidents, on the other hand, was missed out. Daily *Udayavani* of Manipal group reportedly carried a front page news in the days preceding the silver jubilee celebrations mentioning B.V.Baliga as the founder of the *Mandal*. Similar claims of G.G.Vasudeva Prabhu as the founder (in a meeting at St. Aloysius College) also angered the Jesuits, who claim that they were in the forefront.

<sup>24</sup> . Paul Moras in whose term the movement for Konkani Academy was planned belongs to the first category whereas John D'Souza who was the President at the time of the Silver Jubilee celebration of the *Mandal* is the case under the second.

<sup>25</sup> . Census figures show that Karnataka state has the largest number of Konkani speakers in India. Language leaders in Karnataka place the figure at two and a half million, though in the Census it is little more than 600000 out of the All India figure of 1.7 million in 1991.

As regards the script for Konkani, KBMK has been using Kannada throughout in all its internal matters and records. For contacts with the Konkani organisations outside Karnataka they use the English language. As a policy the KBMK has not stood openly against Devanagari but with persons such as Lawrence Lobo since 1970s (for a number of terms) or Edwin J.F.D'Souza in mid-1990s, who have no knowledge of Devanagari, working as the Secretary of KBMK, there is no possibility of Devanagari being used in KBMK. Even though some GSB individual were to take up the position of Secretary, the scope for Devanagari is not likely to be created because of the language environment surrounding the Konkani community in Karnataka. Tulu, which is the language of the region, has Kannada as its script and Konkani is no different in the eyes of the state<sup>26</sup>. The language policy of the Karnataka state government makes Kannada language and script compulsory and knowledgeable people feel that getting state support is possible only with Kannada script<sup>27</sup>. Devanagari has no practical, significant role in Karnataka, especially after the establishment of the *Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy* which has to use Kannada script as the government body. Even in the activities organised by the institutions of the GSBs Devanagari has only a symbolic presence at best.

Inter-associational contest representing the competing community claims invariably involves KBMK. In early 1980s KBMK was asked by the Manipal group to prepare the plan for a Konkani Lexicon. Fr. Mark Valdar prepared it but

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<sup>26</sup> . In fact the establishment of *Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy* was the work of Veerappa Moily, a Tulu speaker, who as the Chief Minister of Karnataka wanted to do something for his Tulu language. Being aware of the work of Konkani he announced the Academy for Konkani along with that for Tulu and Kodagu, the two regional languages of his region.

was denied permission by the Bishop to attend the meeting proposed at Manipal to consider the same. Three months later the Bishop called a meeting, procured a copy of the proposal from Fr. Valdar and approached the government for assistance. The Manipal institution T. M. A. Pai Foundation also sent the copy of the proposal (received from KBMK/ Fr. Valdar) to the government but the project of Lexicon was sanctioned to St. Aloysius College. It was given to the Jesuits but they could not do it. The Institute of Konkani decided to take it up and convened a meeting. The Institute also appealed for material and received some from Konkani people in different parts of Karnataka. But the work did not proceed further. Dr Willy D'Silva, a secular priest who was given the responsibility later, started the work with his own organisation *Konkani Sahitya Kala Samiti* after training youth to assist him. Some knowledgeable senior Konkani writers, activists from different parts of Karnataka, were made to compile lexical items and audio recordings were also done under the project. The material collected this way is still lying with the Institute but the work has been left half way, with no one to state the exact position of the project<sup>28</sup>. The church authorities having become helpless in the matter, the Lexicon project remains in suspended animation. Even after ten years (1995) the Institute was on the look out for a Chief Editor for the project (Amar Konkani Dec. 95). T. M. A. Pai Foundation expressed its intention in 1998 to do the work on similar lines but have not made a beginning as yet.

Dr. Willy D'Silva had problems with the church authorities in the matter of Konkani translation of Bible too. Translation was planned in early eighties on

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<sup>27</sup> . Dr. William Madta, who was the President of the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the *Parishad*, mentioned this in his Presidential Address. K.K.Pai considers Devanagari as a cultural script, prefers it for convenience but at the same time 'has no serious objection to and sees no practical difficulties in adopting any script'.

<sup>28</sup> . This is based on the interview of Mr. Lawrence Lobo, secretary, KBMK and visit to the Institute.

demand of the priests, for which Fr. Pinto was sent to Rome and Israel to learn Hebrew and the task was assigned to him. He was given five years to complete the assignment. Even after a decade the work was not done. Others like Barbosa, Menezes also could not do it. Fr. Valdar was willing to work if he was assigned only that work exclusively. Fr. Willy completed it on his own and helped the church in a way. He also achieved the goal of freeing the Mangalore Catholic Konkani from massive Kannadisation that was noted by many but not acted upon in the past (Interview-Fr. Mark Valdar). But his translation was not allowed for circulation on technical/ procedural grounds. The Bible translation was printed but copies could not be sold as officially approved as Willy D'Silva asked for '*imprimatur*' after it was printed and it was refused by the Bishop. The official translation was not available till 2001. Willy's work had to be sold at a heavy discount unofficially. Church authorities are also said to be interfering in the editorial policy of '*Raknno*' which has led to frictions in the past. The concern for Konkani on the part of the church authorities has also seen ups and downs. The KBMK office and records were ordered to be removed from *Raknno* premises, without prior notice, which is cited as the instance of 'subjective' approach of the church to Konkani movement (Interview – Lawrence Lobo).

*Konkani Parishad* has had all its sessions held in Karnataka till today through the GSB support but not necessarily that of the KBMK as the state body of Konkani. The sessions in South Kanara - Udupi (1940) and Mangalore (1974) - had the patronage of the Manipal Pais whereas those in North Kanara Karwar (1939) and Sirsi (1995) had Adv. Shanbhag and Mr. Sonde as the leading spirits. Those in Bangalore (1984) and Belgaum (1999) were supported by Mr. Hattikatur

and Mr. Chanda Pai respectively. The participation of Jesuits and others has been ensured but the crucial decisions are taken in a smaller group of GSBs .

As a result of the covert conflict between groups for supremacy in the organisation, there have been attempts to create new bodies. Though KBMK claimed to be the state body, it remained so in theory as different regions of the state were not represented in the managing committee. During the presidentship of Paul Moras *Kumta Taluka Konkani Sahitya Parishat* organised Karnataka State level Konkani Conference at Kumta on 27<sup>th</sup> January 1991, which was inaugurated in the presence of language leaders from the four coastal states (*Aboli*, souvenir –1991). The organisation was led by the local Hindus - mainly GSBs – though others were involved as members. There was a move to form *Akhil Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Parishad* (AKKSP) as a federal Konkani body at the state level. But after the change in guard at the KBMK<sup>29</sup> the AKKSP activities did not move ahead though some district units were formed. Similar units were also formed by the KBMK but their activities were never seen. The General Secretary of the AKKSP found a place in the KKSA in subsequent years under the presidentship of Basti Vaman Shenoy who took over while he was the KBMK president. During this time *Akhil Karnataka Konkani Parishad* was registered and inaugurated at Bangalore on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1993 (Souvenir, 1996), which conducted some activities such as All India Konkani Drama Festival every two years. This *Parishad* was promoted by some Catholics settled in Bangalore.

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<sup>29</sup>. Paul Moras was succeeded as the President KBMK by Basti Vaman Shenoy, who wanted KBMK to be the apex Konkani body at the state level with its regional and district units.

The formation of KKSA was demanded in a resolution passed in the Pedne (Goa) session of the *Akhil Bharatiya Konkani Lekhak Sammelan* (ABKLS) in 1990<sup>30</sup> and a representation in that behalf was given to the Karnataka state government in the next session in Karwar (N.K.) in 1992. This was followed by the awareness and mobilisation campaign culminating in 'Konkani Jatha'. KBMK president Paul Moras roped in people from different groups for the purpose. Mr. Basti Vaman Shenoy, a GSB and Mr. Eric Ozario belonging to the leftist/secular Catholic group worked to make the movement broad-based. But the response on the day of the Jatha was disappointing. As the Indian Parliament had already passed an amendment to include Konkani in the VIII schedule along with Nepali and Manipuri, one of the demands of the Jatha had already been met. The main and the only demand of the establishment of the KKSA under the state government was presented at the state secretariat by the delegation of the Jatha. The public meeting that followed the presentation of the memorandum witnessed a dramatic turn with a demand by some individuals to appoint V. J. P. Saldanha as the president of the proposed Academy<sup>31</sup>. There was slogan shouting in support of the demand in this small gathering of Konkani activists. The GSB and the secular group had no inkling of this. Eric Ozario of the secular group objected to this, saying that this was not the time or the occasion for the claim or decision on the issue. The anxiety and impatience of individuals and groups to stake claims was

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<sup>30</sup> . This was the last one to be called *Lekhak Sammelan*. The name was changed to *Sahitya Sammelan* by shifting the word *Sahitya* from *Akhil Bharatiya Konkani Sahitya Parishad* and naming the *Parishad* as *Akhil Bharatiya Konkani Parishad* in 1992.

<sup>31</sup> . Saldanha himself claimed it as a unanimous nomination by the representatives of Konkani speaking people from all over Karnataka. (Bio-data in Souvenir, 1996).

open and clear<sup>32</sup>. This led to dissolution of the Academy within a year, even before it became functional under V. J. P. Saldanha. Its revival under the GSB President B. V. Baliga fell in the same pattern as KBMK<sup>33</sup>.

The secular group was engaged mainly in literary and theatre activities after its leaders' early stint with trade-union activities and programme of social reforms. The formation of '*Ranga Taranga*' for theatre activities and '*Mandd Sobhann*' as a group for cultural awakening, experimentation and research in Konkani was a positive step which was followed by annual cultural festivals viz. '*Parab*' (Festival), '*Saant*' (Fair) in 1992 and 1993 to showcase the variety in cultural expression from the whole of Konkani region bringing the creative and active Konkani groups together. The promoters of the event toured the area upto Ratnagiri to invite groups to participate but found the response from Goa very poor both in organisational support and in actual participation of cultural groups (Interview – Eric Ozario). But through these events, Konkani speakers in Mangalore had a close view of the larger Konkani picture. This was followed by the GSB initiative for the *Vishwa Konkani Sammel* (The World Konkani Convention) of December 1995.

Both Jesuits and the GSBs have their own educational institutions providing facilities from the elementary to degree college level but they have not been able to introduce Konkani as a medium or as a subject/ language in studies

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<sup>32</sup> . Though the response to *Jatha* call was very poor, there was lot of arguing within the small group on the issue of members to be included in the delegation to be sent to meet the Chief Minister that day. Even after the granting of the Academy the inauguration of the Academy office was planned (without any official sanction of the accommodation or arrangement of infrastructure) in a private building at the hands of a national political leader to give an impression that the government had allowed free hand to the President. In the first meeting of the Academy the President demanded the perquisites such as official car for himself and also the monthly remuneration/ allowance.

inspite of repeated resolutions and discussions in the sessions of the *Parishad*. Some examinations of proficiency in Konkani are conducted by the Kanara High School of the GSBs mainly for their own students through *Konkani Vibhag* and also a Diploma course is run at Kanara College. St. Aloysius College also has its Department of Konkani Studies with provision of Konkani as optional language at undergraduate course in Arts. The Department started with 13 students in 1994-95 and has limited the number of students offering Konkani as optional language to 20. According to Prin. Madta, not many students opt for Konkani on their own. The College also conducts a one-year Diploma and a correspondence course leading to the award of Post-graduate Diploma. The response to Correspondence Course is encouraging and more than six hundred adults from different parts of India and even some *Manglurkars* abroad were registered as students.

This work is run parallelly in the two community institutions, with no exchange or collaboration whatsoever between them. Contents of the courses are also prepared to emphasise the distinct varieties of Konkani and make use of specific material produced by the two communities. GSB group, while adopting the syllabus of Goa University, has included the history of Saraswats of Dakshina Kannada, folklore of Dakshina Kannada in their Diploma course. The undergraduate course of Mangalore University run in St. Aloysius College includes the study of literary works in five forms viz. Essay, Novel, Drama, Poetry and Short story, under which the writings of Catholic writers are taught.

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<sup>33</sup> . B. V. Baliga could not continue for long on account of his age and failing health. On his resignation Basti Vaman Shenoy was appointed as the President. He continued for one more term till 2001.

All these writings are in Kannada script and the course is run entirely in the same script. Same is true for the Diploma courses under the Department. In the examinations and courses at Canara College, script option is provided and some 30% are said to be offering Devanagari.

Mangalore University does not have Konkani Department. Even for Konkani in the undergraduate studies, St. Aloysius College is the only institution providing the teaching facility in the entire state. GSB institutions do not find it worthwhile to introduce Konkani teaching even with around 30% of their students coming from Konkani speaking community, as there is 'no demand for it' and 'no prospects', according to the institutional Heads and management representatives<sup>34</sup>. According to Mr. K.K.Pai, Konkani cannot be a medium of education in Karnataka, as there is 'no currency' in absence of any job opportunities through Konkani. He points out to 'fanatic approach' of every state in the matters related to language and feels that 'the practical use of Konkani in Karnataka is almost nil'. Greater popularity of Konkani among Christians there is because of its role in religious practices, he says. But it has to remain as a spoken language, according to him. Production of literature can ensure better future for the language academically, but one can do without Konkani. Konkani Linguistic Minority Educational Institutions Association (KLMEIA) secretary Dr. K. Mohan Pai does not see wisdom in introducing Konkani in schools as there are no takers. Even Kannada is being pushed to the wall by English. in which people see their future. Fr. Samuel Sequeira, during whose tenure as editor of *Raknno* there were

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<sup>34</sup> . The Principals of MGM College, Udupi and Bhandarkar College, Kundapura (both under the Manipal management) have no plans for Konkani. K.K.Pai of the management says, 'it has no practical value here'.

serious attempts to fix orthography of Konkani in Kannada script, is convinced that Konkani cannot survive through one script. Insisting on Devanagari is sure to cause death of Konkani in the region, he feels.

There is a Chair in Christianity under Mangalore University but nothing about Konkani language, culture or community. When asked about this Chair, the GSB representatives in the know of things discount it as insignificant, saying that the University allows establishment of a Chair with a specific amount of endowment from anyone interested in installing the Chair for a specific subject, but avoid explaining as to why there is no Konkani Chair (Interview – K. Mohan Pai). Seen in the light of the existing diversity in dialects, scripts and styles, and more importantly, with preponderance of literature in the dialect used by Catholics, GSBs see no benefit in such an arrangement. As for Catholics, the existing Chair establishes their significance as a community, on the basis of which they can relate to Konkani. Their initiative in introducing the language at the undergraduate level within the university system has provided them the desired leverage in language studies. In any plan for further advances in academic field, this will obviously act as the basis. But, for any development in this direction the hitch lies in the disagreement on the language variety to be adopted for the study, and also the comparative advantage to the communities involved viz. GSBs and Catholics.

Introduction of Konkani in primary education is equally problematic. While journalists, literateurs, leaders, educationists stress on the need to introduce Konkani in elementary education, no one has taken any practical steps in that regard. The state government has not included Konkani in the list of languages to

be taught at elementary stage, against which the KBMK filed a writ in the High Court (Amar Konkani, July 1994). But the Konkani Linguistic Minority Educational Institutions Association (KLMEIA) as a specialised body has no plans to encourage the learning of Konkani by the children of Konkani speakers. Jesuits have their own Catholic Board of Education for the Mangalore Diocese but has taken no specific action on the matter. KLMEIA published a pictorial primer for Konkani using Kannada script but could not ensure its use in schools under the managements of their own members, due to 'teachers' indifference' and 'overall apathy' (Interview - K. Mohan Pai). Also the KLMIEA worked more as a GSB organisation than a broader one covering all the Konkani institutions, because 'their (Catholics)' response is poor, as they have the minority protection through religion', according to a responsible office-bearer. This explains the remoteness of possibility of Konkani getting place in education in Karnataka.

### **Linguistic Minority Issue**

What is significant for the GSBs is the protection of interests - essentially their business and economic interests – through Konkani. Manipal Pairs have made it happen through T.M.A.Pai Foundation registered in 1981 as a Konkani linguistic minority Trust which owns and manages different educational institutions of higher education in all the major professional fields like Engineering, Pharmacy, Law, Education, Commerce and Business Management along with some secondary schools. This Foundation came as a way out of the potential threat of governmental intervention in the managerial control of educational administration of professional institutions in Manipal. It was the

advice and support of Shri. N.Purushothama Mallaya that came handy. All the institutions which were seen as the income-generating enterprises were brought under the Foundation to keep them out of the clutches of government policy (requiring allotment of specific admission quota to the state government) by shielding them with the constitutional safeguards applicable to Linguistic Minorities. The case of Konkani caste in Kerala being recognised as a Linguistic Minority and all the protection provided to the institutions run by the managements in this community helped in securing the same benefits to the community in Karnataka, to which the Pais belong. Mr. Mallaya was made one of the Trustees of this Foundation, having as its main objects 'the promotion of Konkani language and the culture of the Konkani speaking people and the promotion of education in all its branches for the benefit of Konkani speaking students and also students of all castes and communities'. This is done through Fellowships to students of Medical and Engineering colleges, annual Book Awards for best books in Konkani irrespective of script used, also All India Konkani Drama competition and annual Felicitation programme to honour five outstanding *Konkanies*, one of them posthumously, for their distinguished achievement in different fields of human activity. There are prominent Konkani speakers questioning the loyalty to Konkani in this context on account of the use of English made invariably in conduct of these functions held in the name of Konkani by a Konkani language body. The House of Manipal Pais have their Academy of General Education established in 1942 under which all the educational institutions functioned till 1981. Now the Academy has under its control only primary and secondary schools and colleges of general education.

Under the provisions of constitutional safeguards to Linguistic Minorities, now there is the Manipal Academy of Health and Education (MAHE) which is a Deemed University. While all this is done in the name of Konkani, the language finds place in not a single institution belonging to the enterprising family symbolising the Saraswat pride and Konkani world.

K.K.Pai, the President of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation feels that in spite of 20-25% of Konkani speaking students in the Manipal institutions like schools and colleges of general education there is 'no possibility of introducing Konkani as there is no particular advantage, but every disadvantage' (Interview) from it. As a medium, Konkani stands no chance, 'has no currency', according to him, because job opportunities through it are very little. He feels that a proper beginning in this respect was possible in Goa but the enthusiasm in Goa is on the wane, he feels, saying that leaders are getting old. The House has a daily *Udayavani* in Kannada language which is seen as a purely commercial, profit-making venture by many among GSBs while Konkani speaking Mangalore Catholics consider it communal<sup>35</sup>. To deal with the problem there is an alternative '*Janavahini*', which is seen as church-sponsored by the GSB elements.

On the whole, be it education or communication, Konkani speakers, supporters and activists have patronised English keeping practical benefits in view. The church authorities have felt the 'pressure' of the laity and started English masses in number of places. The only means of survival of Konkani for Catholics, the Mass, is slowly losing to English. This community is also divided over the nature of work needed for the movement. Some claim doing 'service' to

Konkani while others feel the language does not need service or sacrifice (Interview – Edwin J.F.D'Souza). The issues of culture connected with customs, rituals, dress etc. often figure in this debate.

Communal divisions operate in the KKSA formed by the state government. After the initial hiccups because of the 'arbitrary demands' of the first President V. J. P. Saldanha, the body was revived in October 1995 with efforts of R. V. Deshpande, the then Minister for Industries in Karnataka government, under the captaincy of the GSB veteran B. V. Baliga, who had to resign later due to ill-health. The contribution of both the stalwarts – Saldanha and Baliga - to the world of literature and journalism was undisputed but when it came to managing the organisational affairs, the Academy did not benefit from their long experience. Basti Vaman Shenoy who had managed to take over the reins of KBMK within almost a year after he entered the movement during the *Jatha* phase in 1992, succeeded Baliga as the Akademi President on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1997. This was questioned by the *Konkani Lekhakancho Ekvott* (Unity of Konkani Writers). The *Ekvott*, formed in 1994, and comprising wholly of Mangalorean Catholic writers<sup>36</sup> raised objection on the appointment of a 'non-literary' person on the body having literary function (the Academy has '*Sahitya*' - literature - in its name) and wrote to the concerned minister in the state government. They noted the neglect and

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<sup>35</sup> . The Daily newspaper does not carry any editorial. 'It is both commercial and communal' says Fr. Samuel Sequeira.

<sup>36</sup> . The *Ekvott* has only one member of GSB community in H. Raghavendra Rao. The group claims to be working in the interest of Konkani writers. But according to Fr.Samuel Sequeira (the ex-editor of *Raknno*) it was formed to challenge his policy of making necessary changes in orthography to bring some uniformity while publishing their writings in '*Raknno*'. Some of the KKSA members look at the *Ekvott* as anti-Academy collective.

sidelining of literateurs in the formation of the body. They also considered the cultural festival organised by the Academy in Delhi as unwarranted and wasteful<sup>37</sup>. Academy members clarified that there were no specialised Konkani Academies for literature, culture, folk arts etc. in the state and the single Academy was supposed to attend to all these aspects of Konkani culture and society. The matter was debated in Konkani circles for quite some time. Continuation of Shenoy as Academy President for the second term also raised eyebrows, more on communal lines, as it was seen, perhaps, as depriving the Catholics of their turn the second time<sup>38</sup>.

The GSB attempt to retain the control of the Konkani movement was seen in the organisation of the World Konkani Convention (*Vishwa Konkani Sammelan - VKS* in December 1995) under the auspices of KBMK. Basti Vaman Shenoy as the KBMK President was the Chief Convenor and could get the support of the Manipal group as well as the secular group in Mangalore. He had realised that the AKKSP had defined its role as a state body with federal structure, trying to have the District *Parishads* as its units. That would impinge upon the status of KBMK. In order to make KBMK appear as the state level organisation he initiated the process of opening regional units of the Mandal. The plan of VKS was ambitious and the event unprecedented. The awareness campaign spread over a few months including a 65-days All India tour by a cultural troupe and involvement of people and groups from different parts of India as well as other countries all over the world gave the event a wide publicity and good response. The objectives of

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<sup>37</sup> . The real issue was that Catholic writers of Mangalore had not found any place in the Akademi. In the first body there were seven Catholics (including the president and a Siddi community representative) whereas the second team under Baliga had four Catholics. The only Catholic member from Mangalore was Eric Ozario, who belonged to the third group formed by Chafra, considered as anti-establishment.

‘bringing together Konkanis, identifying the areas of unity and diversity, facilitating preservation and promotion of language, arts and culture, prioritising for unified development, expressing concerns relevant to Konkanis and enhancing pride and prestige of the Konkanis’ (*Vishwa Konkani*, 1995) were highlighted through the event. But the deliberations in the Convention and observations by prominent sections of the movement brought to the fore some issues of authority and antagonism. The whole project was seen as the GSB attempt to strengthen its claim over Konkani. All the major committees in the organisation were headed by the GSBs though a balance was maintained in the numbers by allotting equal positions to the Catholics. There was a charge that the apex national body ABKP was ignored in the process of organising this world event. The exhibition in the Conference showcased the cultural aspects on caste lines which was said to go against the unifying role of the movement (*Goa Today* January 1996). The script issue came out forcefully through a presentation<sup>39</sup> and the discussion following it took regional and communal turn. The 21<sup>st</sup> session of the *Parishad* that was organised in Bombay about a year later (18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> January 1997) had a special sitting to assess the impact of the Convention on the Movement, wherein the representative of KBMK, the organising body of the event was himself critical about the organisation and the later developments, whereas the ABKP functionary and *Goa Konkani Akademi* President Uday Bhembre in his capacity as the editor

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<sup>38</sup> . The change has now come with Rev. Dr. Alexander F. D’Souza taking over from Shri. Shenoy.

<sup>39</sup> .Rev. Dr. Pratap Naik, S.J. was to speak on ‘The main features of Konkani Literature and Culture’ but the paper he read on the occasion was titled as ‘Elements and Writers of Modern Konkani Literature’ in which the emphasis was on regional contribution to Konkani literature in different scripts limited to published books, comparison in quantitative terms to show that Kannada script literature of Konkani in Karnataka was not given its due, and that Devanagari users’ leadership was dictatorial.

of daily *Sunaparant* questioned the validity and relevance of the issue on the *Parishad* platform (*Sunaparant*, editorial dtd. 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan.1997).

The World Konkani Convention was announced in 1994 after Basti Vaman Shenoy had taken over as KBMK president from Paul Moras. As the establishment of KKSA was announced by the Karnataka state government on the representation of KBMK under Moras and the Catholic side had managed to gain some prominence in the new body, the GSB side wanted to make sure that its place in the movement was highlighted through this event. Also both Kannada and Marathi, the two major neighbouring languages as well as Tulu, the regional language had already organised such world events. While the GSB group managed the event well, when the KBMK leadership shifted to Catholic group soon after the Convention, the issues of resources and finance raised for the grand event cropped up. The balance in the Convention kitty after meeting the expenses was transferred to the account of '*Konkani Bhas Ani Sanskriti Pratishtan*' a Trust promoted and established by the KBMK and 'entrusted with the dual task of establishing the "*Vishwa Konkani Sanghatan*" (The World Konkani Organisation) and the "*Vishwa Konkani Kendra*" (The World Konkani Centre) in order to implement the resolution passed at the *Vishwa Sammelan* (proposed Preamble, n.d.). Some amount was invested in the land for construction of the proposed *Vishwa Konkani Kendra* (The World Konkani Centre) building, causing furore within the incoming team of KBMK office bearers who took over from the team led by Basti Vaman Shenoy. The *Ekvott* leaders had managed to gain control of

the KBMK<sup>40</sup> but were not able to use the money collected in the name of the Convention by the *Mandal* as the organiser. The formation of *Konkani Bhas Ani Sanskriti Pratishthan* under Basti Vaman Shenoy, appointment of M. Raghunath Shet as the Convenor of the *Vishwa Konkani Kendra* Committee ensured the continuance of the GSB hold on the resources and the wider movement.

Literary developments were largely under the Catholic group influenced by the Jesuits. To neutralise their influence the third group of secular, progressive activists among them was promoted through the Academy and the Convention, giving it wider exposure and opportunity to mobilise resources and goodwill for certain projects planned by its leaders<sup>41</sup>.

### **Goa and the Identity Issue**

The homeland of Konkani – Goa – has a special place in the Konkani language and script debate. The major shift in terms of language loyalty among Hindu elites is said to have occurred here in the twentieth century. But the literary and cultural activities and movements led by these sections have all made use of Marathi. The major educational institutions under the GSB managements provided education in Marathi medium till early 1980s, after which they gradually changed over to English. A small section among the GSBs (intellectuals and ideologues) propagated Konkani and even started schools but made little impact

<sup>40</sup> . Dr Edward Nazareth became the new President and Edwin J.F.D'Souza the secretary of the Mandal. D'Souza had earlier resigned as the secretary protesting against mismanagement and non-co-operation.

<sup>41</sup> . Eric Ozario represents this group. He has worked closely with Basti Vaman Shenoy for the Convention and in the Academy. After the '*Bhomvddi*' of 65 days (undertaken to create awareness around the country for the Convention ) on the lines of his earlier tours for his events like *Parob* and *Saant*, he later he used the same method to mobilise resources for his ambitious *Kalaangan* project through '*Dayja Divya Yatra*' (The pilgrimage of the lamp of tradition) blessed by the Bishop of Mangalore.

on the larger scene. However, these few were identified with the creative genius of the community and also known for their proximity to national leadership<sup>42</sup>.

Having realised the need to assert their identity and status in the face of ridicule and humiliation at the hands of the Brahmin castes in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala, GSBs used language as a tool and managed to get their spiritual leaders (*Swamis*) bless their efforts. The strengthening of the spiritual seats in the community in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup>, which was necessitated by the problems emerging out of modernisation<sup>43</sup>, had also facilitated this representation of language in community terms. Some intellectuals acted as advisors to the *Swamis* and ensured their support and blessings to these language activities. Presence of *swamis* at the inaugural functions of the *Parishad*, their presiding over the ceremonies and cultural programmes organised in the name of caste associations helped in convincing the community members of the genuinely communal nature of the cause of language and gain their support in the language activities. With the religious freedom gained during the Republican phase of the Portuguese colonial rule, the benefits were reaped by the GSBs as the Hindu elites. With increasing expansion of business opportunities the trade and business section in the

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<sup>42</sup> . B. B. Borkar (Bakibab) and Laxmanrao Sardesai were close to Kaka Kalelkar in the years of Indian independence, Ravindra Kelekar, Chandrakant Keni were the disciples of Kaka Kalelkar, and through him came in touch with Nehru. Purushottam Kakodkar, Pandurang Mulgaonkar were also close to Nehru. Gurunath Kelekar had Sarvodaya influence.

<sup>43</sup> . Issues like foreign travel supposedly prohibited by the *Dharmashastras* raised storm in the community. The *Swami* ostracized the caste members for their journey abroad. After mediation and negotiations, the members were readmitted on their performing certain rituals.

community managed to get hold over the administrative affairs of the *Maths*. The role of *Math* and *Swami* as the community symbol was now strengthened with growing material wealth in the name of the *Maths* and business skills were needed to manage the estates. Following the competition among the powerful sections in the nationalist struggle through cultural and linguistic claims the GSBs gained prominence in the southern parts of the west coast. Goa, as a territory isolated politically and also economically to some extent, was ideal for such programmed glorification of the community. Also the position lent to Goa by the community members settled in other parts of western India (for whom Goa was the home of their culture, blessed by their family deities) made such claims stronger.

Control of temples by the caste leaders through the means of law under the Portuguese rule in the nineteenth century provided them with socio-cultural leadership and economic control. Goan temples were brought under legal framework by the Portuguese rulers by making the registration of '*Compromissos*' (compromises or agreements related to temple management) mandatory and it is accused that as the educated caste among Goan Hindus, also more familiar with procedures and codes, GSBs registered their own caste members as the members of temple managements (Mazanias) in many cases thereby depriving other castes of managerial rights<sup>44</sup>. Temples owned large landed properties and income from them was at the disposal of their managers.

(*Konkan Times*, 19 )

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<sup>44</sup> . The movement for open access to temples – *Devalle Khulee Karaa* – in 1980s was based on this issue. According to the leadership of the movement the Portuguese Regulations of 1886 and the amended ones of 1833 are mentioned in the discussions but there were earlier regulations of 1858 which do not figure anywhere. Cases of the temples of other castes appropriated by the Saraswats find mention in the booklet by N. D. Verekar mentioned elsewhere in this study. The Hanuman temple (Mala, Panaji) membership rules allow no Saraswat as *Mahajan* after bad experience in case of Mahalakshmi temple in Panaji-

The access to literature, media and social organisations beginning from the 20<sup>th</sup> century helped in brightening this projection of their community as the cultured and advanced one (*Swayamsewak*, March-July, 1920). The revenue administration had members mainly from the Saraswat community and their role in maintaining records and using information for their benefit is reflected in the literary works of the time. The self- projection of the community in the Goan scenario became easier with the branding of Catholics as pro-Portuguese and ignoring the silent majority of the Hindus. This is seen in the picture of Goa liberation struggle drawn by them in which the leadership is attributed to them, even though there were many others from other communities and castes who had worked with equal zeal and commitment but found scant mention<sup>45</sup>. The coincidence of the Konkani language movement and Goa liberation struggle in terms of period also helped to some extent. GSBs forming a large section of landed gentry or business community among Goan Hindus looked forward to gain control over the affairs of the territory after liberation. The negotiations undertaken by Purushottam Kakodkar with the Portuguese government in the concluding part of the Goa liberation struggle (Interview – Prafulla Priolkar)<sup>46</sup> to

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<sup>45</sup> . Recently there have been demands for recognition and facilities by a group claiming to be the freedom fighters, saying that they were left out because of their underground role in the liberation struggle. The recording of freedom fighters in Goa was done on the basis of certificates issued by particular leaders of the liberation struggle, most of whom were the Saraswats. Those from other castes were mostly illiterate and did not find mention. The intellectual class among Goan Hindus was mainly of the Saraswats and the literary productions being their creations, the descriptions and analysis reflect the feeling of prominence. The history of Liberation Struggle written by M.H. Sardesai was questioned on different counts, one of which was that it glorified a Saraswat leader, taking little note of others who worked in the same period. Many Catholics involved in the liberation struggle did not get the same attention as the Saraswats. These observations were made in the course of discussion with Shri. Madhav Korde, a freedom fighter from Ponda.

<sup>46</sup> . According to Priolkar, the civil rights of those imprisoned by the Portuguese for their anti-colonial activities were suspended for long periods. Kakodkar was trying to get all such individuals – mostly the GSBs – an opportunity to contest the municipal elections in the concluding years of the colonial rule. He also advised Priolkar to stay at home and not to take up any salaried job, as they had a different role in the changing scenario. Kakodkar felt that they would play a major role in the making of free Goa.

acquire the opportunity of participation in the political process, for those released from the Portuguese prisons after long terms in jails, indicate this approach. The same policy continued in the reorganisation of the Congress in Goa by installing the separate Committee in order to sideline the more broad-based National Congress Goa and also in selecting the Congress candidates for contesting elections to the first legislative assembly in liberated Goa.

The major concerns of the community were the land ownership gained over the centuries and also administrative leadership, which its members had come to hold in the last years of the colonial regime, thanks to the liberal attitude of the Portuguese rulers during the Republic and the policy of appeasement adopted by the imperial authorities in the last decades of their rule. In Indian federal set up, the place of Goa was seen by many Congressmen, particularly those from Maharashtra, and some well meaning Goans, as a part of Maharashtra, considering the size and resource base of the territory<sup>47</sup>. The state formation on linguistic basis was seen as a policy suiting the GSB interests. The others who would work for separate existence were the Goan Catholics at large, especially their elites close to the colonial powers, for whom departure of the Portuguese created a psychological shock and cultural void. The language question came

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<sup>47</sup> . In modern times, Goa was always dependent on the remittances from across the Goan borders and abroad. As much as 25% of Goan population was believed to be living outside the territory and supporting the locals financially. Industrial base was non-existent, local produce was inadequate and the major significance of the territory as a transit point and port for imported goods supply to hinterland since centuries had been lost during the colonial period.

handy as a plank to establish Indian identity with the common socio-economic interests<sup>48</sup>.

The association of the leading nationalists among GSBs and Catholics in the early years of liberation had to be justified to seek autonomy which could be claimed on the basis of language and culture. For language (Konkani) the Catholic element was important whereas for culture masses among both Catholics and Hindu had to be counted upon. Initial emphasis was on the unique cultural elements developed over the centuries of colonial rule. The story of sufferings as a language group under the Portuguese was acceptable to the secular Congress and numerical force of Catholics as Konkani speakers was necessary in the new democratic dispensation. Language being the focus of debate the use of Roman script was viewed as a gift of history. For cultural expression in Konkani, one had to refer to forms and performances such as Tiatr, Manddo, Cantar and the same were used in mobilisation, political propaganda, language events like Konkani *Parishad*. The script policy in this period was open and the fact that the Roman script was widely in use was accepted while insisting on the adoption of Devanagari. But the essentialisation of script was ensured in education through the arguments before the Education Commission in 1962. Starting of Konkani schools was attempted mainly in Salcette - '*terra Catolica*' proper - where the

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<sup>48</sup> . The GSBs had prominence among Hindus in Goa which they would lose if Goa was to be a part of Maharashtra. Congress leadership in Maharashtra had already gone to the non-Brahmin Marathas, whose major thrust was on land reforms. Among Brahmins in Maharashtra, GSBs stood below others like Chitpavans, Deshasthas etc. For Catholics, the traditional hold on administration would be lost immediately. Moreover, they would become insignificant minority in Maharashtra, suffering the loss of position as major political, social force in Goan scenario.

Catholic majority had continued even after liberation<sup>49</sup>. Detractors of Konkani had been emphasizing on the fact that there was not a single literate in Konkani in the Goan population, no school or teacher imparted Konkani education (Daily Kesari 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1954), to imply that the language written in Roman script was not to be taken as authentic. This was in line with the claim of Konkani stalwarts that Devanagari was the natural script of Konkani.

In Goa the movement of Konkani remained in the GSB hands though missionaries contributed the substance of the movement in the form of periodicals, Catholic artists provided it with action in the form of live theatre movement (*tiatr*) and rhyme and rhythm through music (*cantaram*). Most of the Konkani films were also produced by these *tiatr* artists. The plan to introduce Konkani as a medium of instruction at elementary stage of education was made possible because of financial help provided by the Pilar Society of local Catholics and some others among Catholics (Nagesh Karmali in KBMK Silver Jubilee, Mangalore, 2000). The founder President of *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* was Pedro Correia Afonso whose image as a reputed administrator – technocrat and opinion-maker among the Catholics was utilised to organise people for Konkani. This was necessary in the early years of liberation to ward off the possible threat of merger that was proposed by the ruling party MGP. In the years between the liberation

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<sup>49</sup>. General impression in British India was that Goa was Catholic dominated. Catholics in Goa were made to believe in this by the Portuguese rulers and the Roman Catholic church. To dispel this image of Goa, journalists such as B.D.Satoskar wrote in the decade of 50's in the leading Marathi journals and newspapers showing the factual position on religious composition of Goa. (Daily *Kesari* – a series of articles in April – May 1954)

and the Opinion Poll the role of Catholic youth, publications in the Roman script and the church schools, all of which had Roman script as an element of their cultural identity, was significant. In the Margao *Parishad* in 1962, Manoharrao Sardesai gave a call – *Konkani Bhas Amchi Mai, Amchi Mai Amkam Zai* (Konkani language is our mother, we want our mother) to counter the slogan of Marathi protagonists that Marathi was the mother-tongue of Goans. Konkani slogan had a vibrant appeal in the later movement for maintenance of Union Territory status through the Opinion Poll in 1967. To ensure popular response to the appeal of ‘*Amchem Goyem Amkam Zai*’ (We want our Goa) the GSB leadership of Konkani made use of economic indicators under the Union Territory status. Government employees, Marathi school teachers were convinced of the economic advantages in terms of pay-scales and service conditions they could continue to enjoy. Those from Maharashtra and Mysore who had experienced a decade, or even less, under their respective states could easily judge the benefits in Goa as an independent unit and supported the ‘two leaves’ (symbol for anti-mergerists in the Opinion Poll) in the decisive victory over the pro-merger side. The ambiguous stand on language taken by the Congress in the first assembly elections in 1963 was now replaced with the clear pro-Konkani view to suit the linguistic state principle and also to facilitate collaboration with the UGP that was formed with the twin principles of Konkani and Statehood. The UGP though identified with Catholics in general and led by Dr. Jack Scucira, was the result of the initiative of Vasudev Sarmalkar and Narcinva Damodar Naik, both GSBs from Margao. The issue of merger being settled once for all, the immediate threat to the socio-economic interests was averted.

The post - Opinion Poll situation in Goa was marked by rethinking on the language stand by the ruling party members (*Sagar Diwali* 1969). Some observers state that the MGP leader and the Chief Minister Bhandarkar had started admitting in private that his stand on language was counterproductive in the Poll. This could be certainly to the advantage of the Konkani leadership and some attempts to exhibit the assertion of Konkani before Goans by using the situation of uncertainty would be in line with the perceptions of Goan Konkani leadership. But this was not done as can be seen from a long silence in the organisations such as the Konkani *Parishad*<sup>50</sup>.

This period is marked by the strengthening of the Hindu social base of Konkani work by attracting the Hindu youth from among the masses. Due to opening of educational institutions of higher liberal education in Goa<sup>51</sup>, the mingling of youth from different sections of Hindu community became easier. While at the time of the Opinion Poll there were only two individuals from non-Brahmin castes in the Konkani circle, by 1970 many were roped in through literary activities and mainly by the local station of All India Radio, which had Konkani as its language<sup>52</sup>. Margao-based Marathi daily *Rashtramat* which had

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<sup>50</sup> . The ninth *Parishad* was held in Bombay in 1967 to coincide with the silver jubilee of the first KBM (formed there in 1942) and the next one was held only in 1974 in Panaji. This was similar to the long silence in this regard between 1942 and 1949, when the nation was witnessing transition from colonial rule to independence. But in case of Konkani the period was crucial as the medium of Konkani was allowed in education and the movement had to extend support in educational efforts. But the success in the Opinion Poll, perhaps, brought a sense of complacency among Konkani activists.

<sup>51</sup> . The two degree colleges of Arts and Science were started by the two industrial houses of Chowgules and Dempos - in Margao and Panaji respectively - within two years of liberation.

<sup>52</sup> . This arrangement was due to earlier efforts of Bakibab Borkar and P.M.Lad, who had played significant role in bringing in Konkani in broadcasting. Lad was in the civil services of the central government and played a crucial role in his capacity as secretary in the concerned department. Borkar had worked with All India Radio in Bombay and Poona before he came down to Goa.

worked towards the success of the anti-merger group in the Poll was edited by Chandrakant Keni and encouraged new writers to write in Konkani.

The Konkani leadership comprising largely of GSBs chose to use the new force in Konkani for Devanagari, providing these sections increasing opportunities to create literature in that script. This would enable the leaders to reduce their reliance on the Catholics writing in the Roman script (who were the main force in terms of quantity throughout the movement till then). A new forum called Konkani Writers' Conference (*Konkani Lekhak Sammelan*) was created in 1968 which had its second session in 1969. Prominent Catholic writers in the Roman script were involved in organising the event on the basis of their support in public to Devanagari. but the stress was on literature in Devanagari and the choice of these individuals was made after ensuring that they would be supporting the Nagari stand publicly. Involvement of Catholic youth in these events obviously declined and the representation to Catholics and Roman script became symbolic through certain positions to senior writers and Goan priests<sup>53</sup>. Newly educated, socially conscious Hindu *Bahujan Samaj* youth participated in significant numbers as they were the new writers who came with the sensibilities and issues hitherto unknown and untouched by the GSB writers in Konkani. This new body also remained dormant for five years after the initial work.

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<sup>53</sup> . The first *Sammelan* in Margao had GSBs as main organisers and dignitaries. Fr. Moreno D'Souza (Panaji, 1969), Evagrio Jorge (Margao, 1975), Felicio Cardoso (Margao, 1979), Fr. Alvaro Renato Mendes (Canacona, 1981) headed the Reception Committees, Fr. Antonio Pereira (Mapusa, 1977) presided over the session.

## Language in Education

Introduction of Konkani as a regional language in schools beyond the elementary stage was managed in mid-1960s during this phase. Books for supplementary reading had to be made available to students of Konkani. Grammar books, dictionaries and such other material suitable for school students was also lacking. The response to elementary education in Konkani reduced after the Opinion Poll, when the general choice rose in favour of English. At the same time, the majority of the people particularly among Catholics, availing of education in increasing numbers, started opting for Konkani as the third language under the scheme of Three Language Formula. Hindus started more and more secondary schools in English medium but not many offered Konkani as a subject. While Devanagari writings, largely of Hindu writers mainly the GSBs, found place in text books, those who patronised it belonged to the traditional users of the Roman script. They opted for the language as they had little choice in the matter<sup>54</sup>. In order to popularise the language among students, some leniency was shown even in the evaluation, according to some teachers. The pass percentages in this language at the Board Public examinations substantiate their observation. The educational administrators' attitude towards the teaching of Konkani was casual and church authorities made arrangements to teach the language but very

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<sup>54</sup> . In most of the missionary schools Indian languages are taught as per the prescribed rules but are given minimal importance in comparison with English language and all other subjects taught in that language as a medium of instruction. In case of third language, the choice is between Marathi and Konkani in most of the institutions, though provision for instruction in French or Portuguese is made in very few, selected schools in major towns. Marathi has been labelled as the language of Maharashtra and offered generally by the Hindu students, leaving most of the Catholic students in mofussil area schools with Konkani as the only choice.

few could appreciate Devanagari. In the initial years some Hindu teachers had to be employed in church schools to teach the Indian languages and quite a few of them often complain that Konkani, Marathi and Hindi are generally ignored by the superiors and even teachers teaching these languages have secondary status in their eyes.

Church too adopted English in its functioning and for communication with the English educated members of the community. In order to satisfy the rising demand for English from the modern well-educated faithful, sermons came to be delivered in English. With this the use of communicative Konkani in school, church and community, in social and cultural communication declined drastically. The general feeling of inadequacy and inefficiency of the language within the upper classes among Goan Catholics<sup>55</sup> now percolated to the lower rungs. Distancing from Konkani became a sign of prestige.

While the switch-over to English in education was finding favour with politicians and people in the two decades after the liberation, production of literature in Devanagari Konkani was gaining speed around the same time. The political control in Goa remained with the pro-Marathi MGP even after three periodical elections to the state assembly, and the pro-Konkani UGP developed fissures over the years, unable to capture power. GSB leadership in the UGP was therefore drawn into the major effort to present a show of strength for Konkani from all the states having Konkani speaking people, in the face of anti-Konkani stand of the Goa government. The case of recognition for Konkani presented by

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<sup>55</sup>. The elites or *Cristao Bamonns* considered *Concani* as *Kriyadanchi Bhas* i.e. servants' language and despised it. For them Portuguese served the purpose of communication within the family and also community. All their social exchange was done in Portuguese, during the Portuguese rule. Liberation replaced Portuguese with English.

the language bodies from Goa and Kerala was pending with the Sahitya Akademi and was threatened by the anti-Konkani stand of the local government as also the strong opposition expected from the Marathi language representatives in the Akademi. To overcome this problem, the Goan Konkani leadership invited the President of the Sahitya Akademi to inaugurate the tenth session of the Konkani *Parishad*, which was organised in the hall of The Institute Menezes Braganza in Panaji on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 1974, under the leadership of the UGP MLA of Margao, A. N. Naik, popularly called Babu Naik.

### **The Turning Point**

The Panaji *Parishad* of 1975 is considered as a landmark event because on this occasion the GSB leadership in Kerala and Goa managed to bring the Catholic writers and activists of Konkani from Goa and Karnataka on the common platform to commit to single script for Konkani in presence of the Sahitya Akademi President Dr. Chatterji. The welcome address affirmed that all had agreed to the position of Devanagari as the natural script of Konkani (Naik, 1974). In his presidential address, K.K.Pai saw multi-literalism of Konkani as a hinderance in the unity of Konkani people and urging for adoption of Devanagari, underlined the following benefits of it :

- There will be unity in the language community,
- Pronunciation of words will be preserved,
- Learning the Vedic language Sanskrit, National language Hindi and the neighbouring languages Marathi and Gujarati will be easy,
- Other language speakers will find it easy to learn Konkani.

In his inaugural address Dr. Chatterji discussed the problems in the full development of Konkani, giving first place to the question of script. His view was that continuing with two scripts – ‘gradually increased use of Devanagari and continuation of the Roman’, but ‘restricting the use of Kannada and Malayalam’ - would help resolve the script issue. He, however, opined against any time frame, saying that it would amount to compulsion. The major suggestion was to translate Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagawata and other Puranas in Konkani as a means to ‘bring the sense of self- respect and strength among all the Konkani people, *especially the Saraswats*, who have preserved the Sanskrit literature and the Shastras for the past many centuries’ (Chatterji, 1974: italics mine). This view about Saraswat interest in and self-respect through Konkani finds credence in the observation of one of the active organisers of the Conference, that Dr. Chatterji wanted to make reference to the role of Saraswats in particular in the development of Konkani, which he was requested to avoid, keeping in mind the role of ‘others’ in the ‘consensus’ on script issue that was being aimed in the course of the event<sup>56</sup>.

Dr. Chatterji expressed happiness over the agreement among the Konkani speakers on the use of Devanagari alone for writing Konkani. Mentioning the testimonial in Konkani pertaining to 1665 A.D. published in Van Rhee’s book *Hortus Indicus Malabaricus* of 1678, he said that Devanagari was in use as the script of Konkani for centuries. Speaking of the Goan Catholics, he said that they also felt that it was necessary to write Konkani in Devanagari script in order to

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<sup>56</sup> . Mr. Pundalik Naik who was encouraged as a leading youth representative from the masses to take lead in the matters of organisation says that it was Mr. Ravindra Kelekar who sounded Dr. Chatterji about the possible fall out of such statement and requested him not to make such an open and direct reference to Saraswats alone.

become one with the rest of India. It was not necessary to remove the Roman script outright, but in the interest of Catholics of Goa and of South Kanara Konkani should be written in the two scripts. He had given this advice sometime earlier when approached by the Konkani Script Council formed for the Catholics. But in his view, the problem of script could be resolved by using the two scripts for time being, before switching over to Devanagari, which was the script in optimal use in India. Ideally, Indian languages should have a common Indo-Roman script, and Devanagari should be employed for Konkani till the time such a common script is accepted.

A delegation of around fifty writers, activists and journalists of Konkani came from Mangalore and in the course of discussions committed to a single script keeping in view the larger interests. They were given an impression that it was the script that was a major hitch in the process of getting the Sahitya Akademi recognition for Konkani and almost everyone concerned spoke of allowing time for the transition to uniliteralism. Fr. Mark Valdar from this delegation spoke in favour of Devanagari and it was accepted that as Konkani had a place in education and government administration in Goa and Kerala, Karnataka will also follow them (Interview – Mark Valdar). The next *Parishad* organised in Mangalore in 1976 under the auspices of KBMK received tremendous response of locals and the announcement of Sahitya Akademi recognition was made on the concluding day of the *Parishad*. Also it was decided to give the *Parishad* a permanent set-up with its bye-laws and a permanent executive. This meant that the regional and religious groupings would gain significance in the formation of the organisation and its policies.

While the major requirement for the Constitutional recognition was fulfilled through this standing as a modern Indian literary language acquired from the apex literary body, the contentious issue of script remained to be resolved and it showed itself in the regional, religious and caste formulations that operated in the later years. The period starting from the Sahitya Akademi recognition in 1975 to the present is marked by a number of actions and reactions on the part of these groups vis-à-vis the official policies and decisions. The politics of script is very much in operation, though certain strategies are seen as emerging to contain the situation or share the benefits. The last quarter of the twentieth century has made this politics more evident, even within the regions identified with Devanagari, as can be seen in the chapter that follows.

## CHAPTER V : THE CHANGING POLITICS OF RECOGNITION

The Konkani language movement in its early days sought a separate identity from Marathi. Shennai Goembab used his energy and intellect to establish the independence of Konkani as a language (Valavalikar, 1930). While blaming Marathi for staking claim over the achievements of Konkani he considered the tendency as expansionist. In this he found that Konkani speakers themselves were not serious about asserting their identity and many who had settled in the metropolis identified themselves with Marathi. According to him, the same was happening with Goan Hindus. His forceful plea to Konkani speakers to stand by Konkani was circulated through his writings. Recognition from the speakers themselves was the major problem. Following him, many took up the task of mobilisation for Konkani. While stylistic and dialectal variety was natural, factors like territorial distance, political divisions, lack of communication between groups of speakers caused by historical factors were seen as the causes for lack of organised efforts on the part of Konkani speakers. But in the course of nationalist struggle the Congress policy had helped in seeking recognition from the colonial government through the census. Later efforts were directed towards getting Konkani a place in the state administration and education (*Parishad Souvenir*, 1989). Use of political means and constitutional methods for this grew after Indian independence<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> . The *Parishad* of 1949 demanded a separate state for Konkani as and when Goa was liberated. Around 1952, a delegation from Karwar under Adv. Kamath met the then Union Home Minister to discuss Konkani state. 1952 Konkani *Parishad* demanded regional language status to Konkani under Art. 347 of the Constitution in the states of Bombay and Madras.

Demands for official status and government recognition to Konkani had started appearing in the resolutions of the *Parishad* soon after the Indian independence. The demand for introduction of the language in broadcasting was met using the advantageous positions of Konkani protagonists in government administration. However, attempts to make place for Konkani in school education for Konkani speaking children in the Bombay state could not go much further due to the volatile situation with regard to languages in the context of the reorganisation demands that gained strength in 1950s. The clear and loud voices with regard to education in Konkani could be heard only in the eighth *Parishad* held in liberated Goa in 1962 (*Jaag*, August 1993).

Under the pro-Marathi MGP government in the years 1962 till 1979 the language issue sparked off hot debates in the early days of the Legislative Assembly. The Ruling party itself had some members who could not speak any other language except Konkani. There were occasions when the opposition forced the ministers to accept and use Konkani in the House<sup>2</sup>. But the government policy to use Marathi in official matters continued to be encouraged on the basis of the colonial precedent and popular support of the majority community and also to project the principle of oneness with Maharashtra intrinsic to the formation of the MGP. The Konkani leadership in Goa had marginal success in introducing and sustaining the use of Konkani in education.

Radio Goa that had been transformed into the All India Radio soon after liberation recognised Konkani as its principal language for the local station,

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<sup>2</sup> . Daily Gomantak Times : 1.2.1993

giving only limited time to Marathi programmes. Recruitment of staff in this establishment, in the first decade of liberation, clearly showed pro-Konkani strategy<sup>3</sup>. As regards the local government's policy on language the ambivalence became more obvious with the MGP legislators representing the Bahujan Samaj voicing their disillusionment. Further the popular demand for English in place of Marathi which came from Hindu majority was used by the Konkani leadership to push forward the need to make room for Konkani as a regional language. KBM activities concentrated on providing text-books and other essential material like grammar books for school children. The text-books written in Devanagari (in the subjects studied at the elementary stage) prepared in Bombay in 1950s were printed with certain modifications and introduced in all the primary schools in Konkani medium. Grammar books were prepared by the GSB individuals who had worked as teachers in the Portuguese schools before liberation<sup>4</sup>. The Diocesan Society schools were the pioneers in introducing Konkani as a third language. They had to conduct instruction in Devanagari as recommended by the Education Commission of 1962 but their natural choice was Konkani in Roman script. Though their students studied Konkani in Devanagari they had not much to offer in terms of literature in Devanagari script. On the other hand, the *Bahujan Samaj* children in Marathi schools had the advantage of script and found their way to publicity and recognition through the GSB-controlled media.

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<sup>3</sup> . It also showed a pro-GSB strategy. On the programme side almost all the new recruits came from among the GSBs, the only exception being Mr. Ramesh Sakharam Barve, who was a Chitpavan and sided with Marathi. The GSB recruits included Yashawant Mahambre, Purushottam Singbal, Nagesh Karmali, Milan and Pushpa Karmali, Premal Keni, Kamaladevi Rao Deshpande, Hira Chodanekar.

<sup>4</sup> . The two prominent names are Keshav V. Prabhu Bhembre and Suresh Borkar. Suresh Pai wrote grammar book in the Kanara variant.

This new crop of Konkani writers brought in the views, problems and passions of the masses into the literary world hitherto dominated by the feudal or middle class litterati. With the Opinion Poll the two language camps were clearly divided and the Marathi side was supported by the large Hindu masses. The medium of Radio being a spoken language medium literary expression in Konkani among the youth from the masses found scope. The print medium in Konkani was making a beginning in this period. Considering the changing time, the Konkani language leadership accommodated the new wave, appreciated the efforts in their bid to contain the new current against their traditional hegemony. By this the masses, that had gained voice against the GSB hegemony, were offered a literary outlet, that worked as a safety valve in the social life in liberated Goa. The access, allowed for the youth from the masses, to media in the post-Poll years also helped the Konkani protagonists in making inroads into the '*Bahujan Samaj*', the imagined monolithic domain of the pro-Marathi MGP. This lent a broad base to the Konkani literary activities hitherto limited to a single caste and, more importantly, helped counter the criticism against Konkani as '*Bamons*' language' or a ploy to please '*Cristaos*'. With this new face the leaders could claim the 'popular' support and patronage to language and literature by the early 1970s. This new 'people's language' was now ready for its legitimate position in the national mainstream. The Sahitya Akademi recognition was acquired by projecting the youth force behind Konkani in Goa<sup>5</sup> and presenting a unified image

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<sup>5</sup> . In the tenth *Parishad* held in Panaji in 1974 Youth Conference formed a very important part. No session of the *Parishad* before or after that had this special show of youth.

of the entire Konkani speaking community on the ticklish issue of script. The Akademi in its decision to recognise Konkani did not refer to a particular script (Gomes, 1999: 15)<sup>6</sup>, but the canvassing work was done by the Devanagari group from Goa and also by the GSB leaders in Kerala<sup>7</sup>, individually as well as through their associations, and for whom Devanagari was the rightful claimant to written Konkani. Karnataka Konkani group, dominated by Catholic writers and activists, did not figure in this exercise even though their numerical strength, consistent creative work, and cultural role was of significant value in the plea for recognition. This, in a way, was the genesis of the politics of script.

The decision on script came in a meeting of the Advisory Board for Konkani (headed by the Goan poet B. B. Borkar), constituted after the Akademi's recognition in 1975. The basis for such decision was located in the objective and a resolution of the Konkani *Parishad* founded by late Madhav Manjunath Shanbhag and not in any other well defined criterion or principle outlined by the Akademi or any other authority. While the objective of 'using Devanagari for Konkani' was seen by Konkani language leaders, mainly the GSBs, as the cardinal principle, the fact that the resolution to that effect was opposed in the second *Parishad* at Udupi in 1940 has never been mentioned. The Advisory Board consisting of ten members (from the four states having sizable Konkani population), which took

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<sup>6</sup> . The concerned Sahitya Akademi resolution reads as follows: 'As Konkani fulfils the criteria formulated by the Akademi for recognition of a language, it is recognised as an independent modern literary language of India'.

<sup>7</sup> . Kerala Konkani is almost wholly equated with N. Purushothama Mallya and his Konkani Bhasha Prachar Sabha. Even the critics of Mr. Mallya recognise this fact. From Goa Konkani Obheas Kendr and Konkani Bhasha Mandal had sent their representations. KBM office bearers met the Akademi members personally and sought their support.

this decision, had six representatives from Goa, of whom one, Rev. Fr. Antonio Pereira, was a Catholic priest and others were the senior GSB writers and language leaders. The members representing Bombay (Maharashtra) and Kerala were Dr. Dattaram Sukhtankar and Shri. N. Purushothama Mallaya, both GSBs. The two members from Karnataka were from Mangalore viz. Shri. V. J. P. Saldanha and Fr. Willie R. D. Silva. The convenor of the Board was B. B. Borkar, who was a recognised poet and writer in both Marathi and Konkani. It was this Board that decided the script for Konkani on behalf of the Sahitya Akademi.

The role of the convenor is significant and it is seen that during the past 25 years all the convenors, except the last one viz. Msgr. Alexander D'Souza of Mangalore, were Goans. The first Board constituted after the recognition in 1975 continued till 1982 with change in the convenor in 1978. Ravindra Kelekar took over from Bakibab Borkar and continued as convenor for another term in the Board till 1987. The plan was to continue the GSB hold over the Board through Dr. Manoharrai Sardesai in 1988, but was 'disrupted' by the entry of Dr. Olivinho Gomes, a Goan Catholic who sought the representation of the state of Goa without the knowledge of this established leadership.

Goan Hindu Konkani leaders (i.e. GSBs) saw to it that only those who toed their line were nominated to the Board. At the time of its recognition, Konkani being identified with the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu, the representation of members was only through the language bodies and not the local (state) government. As a result the specific choices by the organisations were determined by the composition of the leadership and methods of functioning in

these organisations. The language organisations in Kerala and Goa viz. *Konkani Bhasha Prachar Sabha* (Kochi) and *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* (Margao -Goa) were under the GSB control. In the case of Karnataka the representation to the KBMK on the Akademi was made with caution and care to see that the individuals nominated did not oppose the 'accepted stand' on script openly. The Mandal in Bombay was represented mostly by some GSBs settled in Bombay though their role in the affairs of that association has been more of sympathisers and supporter than of activists<sup>8</sup>. In any case it was ensured that the pro-Nagari members were in the majority and also that Goa had higher representation than all the other regions taken together or at least equal to them<sup>9</sup>, thus stalling any potential challenge from within. The Kerala group having accepted Devanagari over the Malayalam script meant that their representative strengthened the Nagari side.

In the matter of control over the decision making process and policy formulation regarding Konkani, the GSB monopoly was maintained with utmost care. However, there were occasions which posed a threat to this monopoly and these lay bare the cracks in the 'unity' of the language movement. They involved caste, community and region as dividing lines, with GSBs as the common factor.

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<sup>8</sup>. Dr. Dattaram Sukhtankar (three terms i.e. 1975-1987) and Sri Arvind Mambro (two terms i.e. 1988-1997) represented the Mandal till recently. J.B.Moraes is on the Board for the current term (1998-2002).

<sup>9</sup>. In mid-1980s, for example, Goa was represented by six members of which five were GSBs and one was a Catholic priest. Both members from Karnataka were Catholics. The lone member from Kerala and two from Bombay were the GSBs, one belonging to Kanara and the other to Goa. There was no one belonging to *Bahujan Samaj* or even a non-GSB in the Hindu members from Goa. In the Advisory Board for Konkani till 2002, the two non-GSB Hindu members from Goa were Kamalakar Mhalshi (1993-1997) and Ms. Jayanti Naik (1998-2002), both of *Gomantak Maratha Samaj* as also employees of Goa Konkani Akademi. Other numerically stronger castes like Bhandaris, having their members on the forefront of creative and organisational scenario have not found representation on the Board till date.

Also these divisions were manifested in the script issue at some level. The most significant events and issues in this period are : ( i ) Mobilisation for Konkani, (ii) Official Language Agitation and OL Act, (iii) State Representation on the Sahitya Akademi, (iv) Promotion of Konkani in Goa University, (v) Revamping of Goa Konkani Akademi, (vi) Sahitya Akademi Literary Awards, (vii) *Thomas Stephens Konkani Kendra* (TSKK) and *Dalgado Academy*, (viii) *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* and *Goa Konkani Akademi*, (ix) *Parishad* Presidents' open resentment, and (x) State Policy and Activists' Response

Each of the above is discussed in brief to understand the nature of forces operating in the name of Konkani and to examine their interrelationships.

### **Mobilisation for Konkani**

Sahitya Akademi recognition in 1975 had come after the ineffective protests of the Marathi language representatives in the Akademi. Although 'no member of the Akademi was competent to speak on behalf of Konkani', adequate support was garnered by using the positions of people like Purushottam Kakodkar, the Congress MP from Goa, Dr. K. J. Mahale, the Goan Professor of French at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and most important, the President of the Akademi, Dr. S.K.Chatterji, who had already made up his mind to recognise Konkani. The literary productions distributed among the members were in Devanagari script, though that formed hardly 10% of the total output in the language. The Marathi language representative in the Akademi pointed out at the meagre quantity of publications in the script to prove its ineligibility for

recognition. The recognition resolution by the Akademi did not specify the script but the Goan Konkani leadership was firm on that aspect.

Having attained the status long desired, now it was necessary to make it a people's language for which the birth centenary year of Shennai Goembab (1976) was seen as the right occasion. For the whole year literateurs and activists of Konkani went to towns and villages in Goa to present a literary-cultural programme called '*Lallitak*' (meaning miscellaneous show) the core of which was the writings and work of Shenai Goembab for Konkani. This provided an opportunity to the new Konkani writers from the Hindu masses to get social recognition, but more importantly, the Konkani leadership could project the 'caste-free' and 'non-partisan' character of the Konkani movement. This was followed by another campaign called '*Novem Goem*' march. The need for a Konkani daily newspaper was stressed time and again by Konkani activists but there was no support and patronage readily available. Roman script weeklies and other periodicals had good readership and active involvement of the church hierarchy. The earlier attempts by people like Felicio Cardoso to promote secular press activity in the Roman script had failed. His campaign (in the years intervening the liberation and the Opinion Poll) to use the potential of journalism to expose the misdeeds of the priests and rich people among both the major communities had resulted in the closure of his publications. His attempts to 'purify' Konkani written in the Roman script which he started in this period, had mixed response. Evagrio Jorge had tried to make an impact through his Roman script periodicals but the economics did not favour him. Gurunath Kelekar, a

GSB, started his Roman script weekly '*Goemcho Mog*' (Love of Goa) in 1977, which became popular among Goans within and outside Goa and even in the middle-east where a large number of them had gone in search of livelihood. However, there were also some Catholics who did not like the idea of a Hindu *Bamonn* running a successful publication in 'their' script (Interview- Gurunath Kelekar).

The political change in Goa in 1980 was seen as the good omen for Konkani and on the death anniversary of Shennai Goembab in 1980, *Novem Goem Pratishtan* was formed with the objective of launching two editions of a daily in Konkani - '*Novem Goem*' - in two scripts. A 45-days march around Goa was organised to create awareness and collect people's contributions for the project. The Roman script daily was started on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1982 under the editorship of Gurunath, Kelekar who offered to close down his '*Goemcho Mog*' though it had established itself as a popular weekly over the five years.

The new 'people's daily' (*Novem Goem*), an evening paper, had good readership to begin with but the management problems and ego clashes led to misunderstanding between the promoters. The *Pratishtan* was chaired by Sara Souza Machado, wife of Froilano Machado, who was an influential politician working for Konkani. While Kelekar was the editor, administrative work was entrusted to Anton Piedade Moraes, who was a government official and had to use his wife's name for official purposes and to draw salary for his work. The evening paper could not make much headway due to administrative lacunae. Suggestion to bring it out as a morning paper was turned down by Kelekar fearing its comparison with the

other dailies published in other languages, particularly Marathi, in Goa. While circulation was lower than expected, the editorial proficiency was questioned consistently by people like Felicio Cardoso, who had experience in Roman script publishing. Circulation did not rise as planned, advertising revenue remained much below the estimates and differences of opinion within the team at the level of planning as well as execution shortened its life. Nagari edition did not take off. The *Yatra* (the march) introduced the cause of Konkani to the whole of Goa, especially the rural areas, and roped in the youth to work for the language. It replaced the slogan '*Konkani Bhas Amchi Mai, Amchi Bhas Amkam Zai*' meaning 'Konkani is our mother, we want our language' (given by Manoharrao Sardesai in early 1960's) with the new one '*Konkani Uloi, Konkani Boroi, Konkantintyan Sorkar Choloji*' i.e. 'speak Konkani, write Konkani, run the government in Konkani' (interview – Gurunath Kelekar). With the local Congress (which had claimed Konkani as its priority) in power, the popular movement was expected to bear fruit. The OL agitation was the next move.

### **Official Language agitation and the Act**

The issue of the Official Language of Goa, Daman and Diu as a Union Territory remained undecided for over two decades after liberation. While Daman and Diu, as the territorial pockets close to Gujarat used Gujarati in education, communication and administration, in Goa the issue was more complex. A majority of elementary schools had Marathi as the medium of instruction, and at the post-elementary stage had English and Marathi but by the

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mid-80s the latter was gradually replaced by the former in most of the institutions. Administration was mostly in English with some role to Marathi at local level institutions such as the Village Panchayat and the Co-operative Society, but only in the new conquest areas.

A Private Bill to make Marathi the OL was brought in mid-1960s during the MGP reign but was allowed to lapse. The legislative assembly of the Union Territory did not discuss the issue any other time under the MGP rule. With the Congress coming to power in 1980, the question of Official Language gained prominence. The pro-Konkani GSB stalwart A.N. (Babu) Naik, strongman of the UGP was instrumental, along with Dr. Wilfred A. D'Souza, in bringing Congress to power in Goa and the Konkani language leadership looked at him with hope. But in the Congress that came to power there were many pro-Marathi legislators and nothing much happened on the Konkani front from the Congress government in its first term. The Chief Minister Mr. Pratapsingh Rane himself was against Konkani.

In the elections to the legislative assembly of the Union Territory in 1984 the Margao seat was contested and won by Adv. Uday Bhembre as an independent candidate against the sitting MLA Babu Naik. It was in this second term of the Congress rule that the OL issue gained prominence. The position of the MGP in the house had improved from two members in 1980 to eight in 1984. A section of the Congress had broken away to form the Goa Congress before the elections but could secure only one seat at the hustings. The two main contenders for the throne – Babu Naik, a GSB, and Dr. Wilfred D'Souza, a Catholic – had

lost the elections. The lone Goa Congress member in the assembly proposed a Bill to make Konkani the official language, which did not get any attention from the House. The Chief Minister, whose party had promised the status of Official Language to Konkani, ridiculed the proposal, humiliated the MLA asking him to speak proper Konkani and advised Konkani lovers to increase literary output in the language. It was this point which brought the issue to the fore.

Congress had to act immediately. The Pradesh Congress Committee under Sulochana Katkar managed to get a resolution passed in the legislature party in favour of Konkani as the OL. The KPA – *Konkani Porjecho Avaz* (Voice of Konkani People)- was formed to get the three demands viz. statehood for Goa, OL status to Konkani and inclusion of Konkani in the VIII schedule of the Constitution fulfilled. The leadership of a young Hindu writer from the *Bahujan Samaj* (Pundalik Naik) and the assured support from the local church authorities marked a major shift in the movement hitherto identified with the GSBs. This agitation, now known as the Official Language agitation, brought in a large number of youth from the *Bahujan Samaj* into the Konkani movement in a big way.

The Goan Hindu masses had got the benefit of mass education and expected to translate the same into economic benefits through employment. The Goan economy was entering a difficult phase with poor returns and falling employment in the mining industry. Growing social mobility fuelled by education among the lower and middle castes placed demands on the state. The growing uneasiness among the youth faced with bleak economic prospects in the state was provided

with concerns for economic security and cultural dignity as constitutional rights. The political agreement on the statehood for Goa also helped the formulation of mass movement. Projection of Konkani as common man's language and recognition of new writers in Konkani as the representatives of the masses raised expectations of unemployed youth. Hoping to gain from the statehood based on language Hindu youth from the *Bahujan Samaj* threw their lot with the agitation. With Pundalik Naik as the convenor of KPA the image of people's movement for people's language was complete.

However, all the policy decisions were finalised with the guidance and advice of the GSB leader such as Adv. Uday Bhembre, the independent MLA. Dissidence within the Congress against the injustice done to Marathi in the Congress resolution, the Chief Minister's sympathy to Marathi and his attempt to seek the public official demand, from local self governing bodies like the Village Panchayats and Block Advisory Committees, for Marathi as the OL, and the strong pro-Marathi counter-agitation by the Marathi Rajya Bhasha Prasthapan Samiti (MRBPS) with the involvement of hundreds of local bodies and associations marked the 555 days agitation before the Official Language Act was passed on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1987, under a Congress whip. The Act, while making Konkani in Devanagari script the OL of Goa, gave 'similar' status to Marathi. For Daman and Diu, it provided for Gujarati.

In terms of stakes Goan Hindus had little to complain, as they were provided the option between Marathi and Konkani. Though the issues of equality of status and propriety of dual language with statutory standing remained

unresolved, their significance was more academic than practical. Because of Devanagari script Hindus had a major advantage. Emotionally and culturally they could enjoy a feeling of security in the provisions of the Act. But for the Catholics, who had contributed to the agitation with full strength, it was a symbolic gain with major restraints. They could not reap the benefits of the status attained by their language because of the condition of script. In the 25<sup>th</sup> state of the Indian union **the language that had claimed secular credentials all along had now become a communal cause through the element of script.**

The KPA thinktank insisted on a single language (Konkani) as the OL on the ground that the interests of locals could be protected only through a single language. The script issue was pushed under the carpet with a rhetoric like ‘voice has no script’<sup>10</sup> referring to the word ‘Avaz’ (= voice) in the name of the organisation. The act involved a compromise between the two language camps and created a state of common dissatisfaction. With ‘Konkani in Devanagari script’ as the recognised OL it made the achievement of Konkani purely symbolic (rather imaginary) for the Roman script users and by denying the OL status to Marathi (keeping its position ambiguous through ‘similar’ status) it hurt the sentiments of the majority of Hindus attached to Marathi as their expression of culture.

As for the Congress the Act was a mixed baggage as it divided the rank and file of the party into two rival camps on language issue, while settling the

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<sup>10</sup> . KPA convenor Pundalik Naik stated that in some places there was a query from the audience at public rallies regarding the script for Konkani to which the leaders and speakers at the rally would reply in these words.

major problems of statehood and Official Language. In the new state with its OL Konkani the Congress had to ensure its continuance in power. Some of the Catholic leaders of Congress in the Old Conquests especially Salcete benefitted from the agitation and strengthened their position in the party set-up. But in the Hindu majority areas the Congress legislators were sure to face difficulties in the electoral battles. To convince the electorate of the wisdom behind the passage of the Act, in order to maintain the support base of the party, the Congress asked the front rankers in the KPA to join the party. This in turn posed problems for the KPA which had maintained a non-political image all through the course of the agitation. It was decided to make the Congress entry of the KPA leaders an individual choice. But the apprehensions and displeasure of the grassroots workers and activists were evident at least in certain pockets ( Vagh in Daily *Tarun Bharat* – 21<sup>st</sup> June 1989)<sup>11</sup>. KPA convenor Pundalik Naik felt that the move aimed at securing of political future of Adv. Uday Bhembre, who was an independent legislator<sup>12</sup>.

Though the OL Act paved the way for statehood it raised new questions in Goa which remain unanswered till today. The status of Marathi vis-à-vis Konkani in the Act was subjected to judicial interpretation and different political parties with Hindu support-base capitalised on these ambiguities and uncertainties. MGP and BJP made use of the provisions in the Act to derive political mileage. The

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<sup>11</sup> . In places like Canacona in the new conquests where Konkani had made a dent after 1976, the KPA leaders' attempts to enrol members for the Congress party faced stiff resistance and attained very little success.

<sup>12</sup> . Interview : Pundalik Naik.

script clause gave rise to another movement led by Catholics mainly in Salcete. The formation of a new state of Goa was announced on the basis of this Act and this also paved the way for the inclusion of Konkani in the VIII schedule of the Indian Constitution. Konkani was facing a paradox – awaiting constitutional recognition at the national level but asking for a nominal foothold at the grassroots level.

The assembly elections for the newly formed state were held in 1989. They were also the first after the passage of the OL Act. In 1990 the question of medium of instruction at the elementary stage of education acquired importance in the light of certain judicial directions to the state. The issue had come up as a result of the demand from teachers in private primary schools in English medium for parity in scales of pay. While the judiciary held the demand legally valid, the state asked the schools concerned to follow the principle of educating the children in their mother-tongue to be eligible for government grants for staff salaries. This gave rise to the debate regarding the right of parents to choose the type of education or medium of instruction. Those in the forefront of this agitation spoke in favour of English as the medium of instruction for their children's education, some even claiming English as their mother-tongue, even though many among them had also been a part of the Konkani language agitation a few years back which demanded justice for their '*Konkani Mai*' (Mother Konkani). This latest agitation on medium of education was tackled by the state government tactfully. For the purpose of availing government grants and getting their teachers paid in the government scales the school managements were asked to switch over to any

Indian language as their medium of instruction. Nothing much changed on the ground, except for the declaration by most of these schools in favour of Konkani or Marathi as their medium of instruction and getting their teachers on par with other teachers in terms of payscales. Most of these 'Konkani' medium schools continued to teach all the subjects (including Konkani) in English (Jaag, ) as before, with their English-educated teachers continuing to serve the 'vernacularised' schools.

The OL status to Konkani being subjected to specific uses only with the appropriate notification by the state, government machinery continued the use of English as before for all its work. In administrative communication the *de facto* OL was retained even after the OL cell was established. This cell under a Joint Secretary organised training programmes in Konkani for government officials, supplied typewriters for Devanagari to different departments but neither of them could help the implementation of the OL Act. The OL Cell had many leading Konkani activists and writers as its members, who aired their frustration through the press statements but could not move the administration.

### **State Representative on the Sahitya Akademi**

Since the day of recognition as the modern Indian literary language granted by the Sahitya Akademi to Konkani, the members who represented the language in the national body were nominated by different language organisations. Goan Hindu Konkani leadership played a key role in this nomination. After the attainment of statehood Goa was to send a representative of

the state to the Akademi. The person who managed to get himself nominated as a state representative was Dr. Olivinho Gomes, a bureaucrat- turned-academician who also became the convenor of the Advisory Board. This was not savoured by the traditional leadership of Konkani. The nominee of the organisations was decided by the local body. The 'seniority principle' favoured Dr. ManoharRai SarDessai, who, as convenor, would then select his team for the Board. But when it was realised that the representative of the state to the General Council of the Akademi had been nominated without their knowledge these leaders tried to pressurise the state nominee Dr. Gomes to vacate in favour of the organisations' representative on the basis of the seniority principle. Meetings were convened to resolve the tangle but finally the issue had to be given up as the leadership had no tangible grounds to demand or force the change (Interview – Pundalik Naik, Fr. Pratap Naik). Dr. Gomes opted for Dr. Mathew Almeida of the TSKK and L.A.Rodrigues from Goa, Dolphy Lobo from Mangalore and Yusuf Shaikh, a Goan in the service of the central government and posted at AIR Mangalore. It was most unlikely to find these individuals in the list under normal circumstances as visualised by the established Goan Konkani leadership. The concern of this leadership is seen in the nominations to the national body term after term. They see to it that the individuals in the different bodies of the Akademi do not raise questions that could be uncomfortable to the language leadership or challenge the existing arrangements.

### **Promotion of Konkani in Goa University**

Goa University was established in 1985 and one of its major thrust areas was promotion of Konkani language. The initial idea was to have a Chair for Konkani, for which the person could be selected from among the individuals close to the local Konkani leaders. Dr. Anant Ram Bhat, a school teacher with research work on comparative study of Konkani and Hindi grammar, and Prakash Thali, another teacher and writer with experience of college teaching but with no research experience – both GSBs - were the two main contenders. But in the process of selection Dr. Olivinho Gomes, a Goan Catholic writer in the Roman script who was working with Government of India in the All India Services, topped the merit list even though the selection committee comprised of the people who would not favour his name. Insiders said that the officer used his connections as an All India Service official to convince the highest officials of the University to throw their weight behind him. His selection was challenged in the court of law by one of the candidates reportedly at the behest of some of the policy makers and advisers of the Konkani language movement in Goa. The case was heard and disposed off on technical grounds but at the same time forbidding the plaintiff from approaching the judiciary again on the same matter. The selected candidate on his part managed to get the full-fledged Department of Konkani studies instead of a Chair originally proposed. He was appointed as Professor and Head in the Department of Konkani Language and Literature in June 1987 and then the Dean, Faculty of Languages from 1998, even though his qualifications/ degrees were in the Social Sciences and not in language or literature. Dr. Gomes also established

the Centre For Konkani Development Studies in 1998 under a scheme of the University Grants Commission (UGC) and became its Director.

Another ambitious project of the university was Konkani Encyclopedia for which the post of Chief Editor was created with provision for payment of monthly honorarium. The post was given to Dr. Manohar Rai SarDessai, the retired Professor of French and a renowned Konkani poet, a GSB, who was assisted by other functionaries. The work of contributing material on different topics was assigned to different individuals identified as experts in the respective fields. The response of the experts was poor and the work lingered on. The contract period of the editor was getting over but the scheduled tasks did not progress much. Though the editor wanted extension it was not given as the project had not moved ahead. Instead, a non-GSB, Dr. Tanaji Halarnkar, who was the Director of Students Welfare in the University, and also working as the Executive editor of the Encyclopedia was given the entire responsibility, in addition to his routine regular duty in the University, but with only a nominal allowance and no special honorarium. He took it up as a challenge and managed to complete the project with all the constraints and negligible pecuniary benefits and returns. The work was completed but many among the GSBs, who guided the language movement took the opportunity to refer to him in an unbecoming manner in the context of this assignment while reacting to certain events that challenged the

GSB hegemony in the organisational matters of Konkani<sup>13</sup>.

### **Revamping of Goa Konkani Akademi**

The events referred to above were those in which the functioning of the autonomous body called Goa Konkani Akademi (GKA) established by the Government of Goa, Daman and Diu in 1985 was sought to be regulated as per the stipulated provisions. The issue was raised after the lapse of over eight years from the date of establishment of the Akademi. Though the main demand was that of revamping the Akademi the primary concern was with the way the language movement was made to suffer for personal interests.

The announcement of formation of the Akademi came in 1984. In the wake of the Congress government assuming power in 1980 the Konkani language leaders looked forward to a shift in language policy. One of the developments expected was the formation of agencies and organisations to support and promote Konkani as a language. Mr. Purushottam Kakodkar, a veteran Congressman close to the Nehru family, claimed that he was assured of the Akademi by the then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Another impression was that the two Goan leaders at the national level – Purushottam Kakodkar and Eduardo Faleiro – had

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<sup>13</sup> . The issue was related to the demand for revamping of the Goa Konkani Akademi as per the provisions of its constitution. The executive editor of the *Konkani Vishwakosh* supported the demand for revamping in his personal capacity on the basis of principle. In a regular weekly column titled 'Bekar Thavay Kule Tashi' in *Daily Rashtramat*, all those who supported the demand for revamping were ridiculed, mentioning the personal attributes, often referring to the caste or professional background of the targetted individuals. The Editor of the daily was criticised by Fr. Pratap Naik for promoting the trend through this 'third rate' writing. ( Personal letter dtd. 9.11.92 from Fr. Pratap Naik to the Editor, daily *Rashtramat*).

discussed the issue of the Akademi (Interview - Pundalik Naik). There were other observations in this regard. One was that the Goa Congress was planning to introduce a Bill in the legislature seeking the establishment of the Akademi. So the Congress government was compelled to take initiative to avoid embarrassment. Purushottam Kakodkar himself disclosed that the Akademi was the result of a resolution in a cabinet meeting in 1984 brought by the local Education Minister Harish Zantye who proposed and insisted that Kakodkar be made the President of the proposed Akademi (GKARC 1992: 1). The Akademi was to be formed and supported by the Government of Goa, Daman and Diu. Provision of funds was to be made by the local government under the Education Department budget.

The first Executive Board of the Akademi was constituted under the Presidentship of Purushottam Kakodkar vide an order dated 28<sup>th</sup> December 1984 (Official Gazette, Government of Goa, Daman and Diu, Series II No.41 dtd.10<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1985). The Akademi was registered as a Society on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1986 under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. As per the provisions of its constitution the Executive Board constituted by the Government was to be replaced within two years i.e. by January 1987 and every two years thereafter, by including the representatives of Konkani organisations and institutions. But till 1992 the same Board continued to control the affairs of the Akademi under the Presidentship of Purushottam Kakodkar. Some of the members on the Board were Goans settled outside Goa and even outside India. Some of them never attended meetings of the Board. One of the appointees, Fr. Lucio da Veiga Coutinho expressed his inability

to be on the Board soon after its constitution and in 1989 even submitted his resignation (letter dtd. May 11, 1989 to Secretary, GKA). But the Akademi under the Presidentship of Kakodkar did not effect any changes in its composition..

It was in mid-1992 that the dissatisfaction regarding the Akademi came out into the open. Since 1988-89 the Akademi was targetted in the meetings of *Konkani Lekhak Sangh* and *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* but the issue was not made public. In 1992 in a programme organised by the Akademi, copies of a handout prepared in the name of 'Konkani activists and writers' were distributed at the entrance of the venue. This prompted some writers and activists to assemble immediately after the function to discuss the ways and means to curb this tendency which could be detrimental to the cause of Konkani and the Akademi. A committee was constituted under the convenorship of Bharat Naik to work towards the reorganisation of the Akademi as per the provisions of its constitution.

The Goa Konkani Akademi Reorganisation Committee (GKARC) met some members of the Executive Board of the Akademi to discuss the matter but was told that it was the government's duty to act on it. The then Chief Minister Shri. Ravi Naik was approached on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1992 by a delegation with a representation demanding immediate action. The action promised by the C.M. did not come about in the stipulated period of one week but the matter was referred by his office to the Education Minister for necessary action (letter dtd. 14 8/92) . The GKARC then decided to involve the major groups and organisations working for Konkani all over Goa in its follow up action.

A meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> August 1992 decided to get the views of the Akademi President on the issue. Accordingly he was approached by a delegation and informed about the demands of the Committee (representation dtd. 27/8/1992), giving him two weeks' time. While welcoming the demands he said that the Akademi Constitution had to be amended following the formation of state and the amendments proposed in 1989 were pending with the government for approval. At the end of the period allowed to the Akademi the committee called a meeting of all the organisations working for Konkani in the state of Goa. In the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> September '92 it was resolved that all the fourteen members of the Executive Board of the Akademi should resign to make way for its reconstitution as per the provisions in the Constitution (Press Note dtd. 12/9/1992) and letters asking for their resignations were sent to individual members. Seven of them were settled outside Goa<sup>14</sup>. One of these seven (Fr. Coutinho) responded (letter dtd. 17<sup>th</sup> September 1992) saying that he had already expressed his inability to do justice to this responsibility soon after the formation of the Board and had sent in his resignation in 1989 which was not accepted. No response was received from others. None among those in Goa was willing to resign. One of them, Shri. Chandrakant Keni said that government alone had the right to ask for their resignations (letter dtd. 15.9.1992 to Shri. Bharat Naik). Some others considered the GKARC as an attempt to create rift in the Konkani movement (*Sunaparant*, Sept. 1992). The GKA President said that some members who wanted to resign

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<sup>14</sup> . This number included Shri. Kakodkar, the President of the Akademi, who used to be in Delhi for major part of the year and visited the Akademi only during his visits to Goa.

were dissuaded by him as that would create a vacuum. He felt that the government had to take appropriate decision and action on the amendments proposed.

The GKARC found that neither the GKA nor the government was moving forward. The attempt to get information on the GKA's efforts for reconstitution was unsuccessful. Finally the Committee decided to adopt a method of moral pressure and announced a one day programme of collective redemption in a public place (Press Note dtd. 29/9/92). This created some movement among the activists of Konkani. Some members of the Akademi tried to create an impression that the GKARC was dividing the Konkani cadres and in some places the meetings were held to protest against the Committee's stand. Some members and their near ones cautioned Konkani workers against involvement in the redemption or association with the GKARC activities (*Sunaparant*, 8<sup>th</sup> Oct.1992).

As a last resort the GKARC filed a writ petition on 12<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1992 in the High Court of judicature of Bombay at Panaji (*Sunaparant* dtd. 13/10/92) which was heard on 19<sup>th</sup> October. The court ordered the Goa government to complete the process of restructuring within six weeks. At the end of this period the government sought the additional time of three months but was allowed eight weeks and the reconstitution had to be effected before 31<sup>st</sup> January 1993. The GKARC movement which continued for four months between August and December 1992 exposed the underlying fissures in the supposedly united Konkani language movement. The press was used by both the sides to give vent to personal

and group feelings (Daily *Rashtramat* and Daily *Sunaparant* issues – September to December 1992).

Though the year 1992 was historic in terms of the ultimate achievement that Konkani protagonists had worked for (inclusion of Konkani in the VIII schedule of the Constitution of India) it was also marked by the clear divisions in the ranks of Konkani activists. The veteran Ravindra Kelekar who, as the ideologue of the Konkani movement, spoke about the secular value of Konkani, and criticised the GSBs on different counts in the past, agreed to address the ‘*Saraswat Mellavo*’ (Saraswat Convention) at Mangeshi in May 1991 against the wishes of many leading Konkani activists. The latter wanted Kelekar to keep himself away from the caste body because they feared reactions from the rank and file among Konkani activists and more importantly from the detractors of Konkani on his association with the caste that was identified with the selfish motives of Konkani language leadership. This move of Kelekar led to debate on the character of the Konkani movement and its leadership. Many of his followers in the language movement approached him personally with a request not to attend the Convention<sup>15</sup>. This debate soon gave birth to *Samata Andolan* for strengthening social equality. The issues relating to the role of Saraswats as a caste group in the Goan society gained prominence through the second half of 1991 (Karmali in souvenir of *First samajik Parishad*, Margao - 12<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1992).

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<sup>15</sup> . Uday Bhembre and Gurunath Kelekar tried to convince him through their personal discussions. Datta Damodar Naik was very critical of this decision of Ravindra Kelekar, and was challenged by the latter in his writings, mainly editorial columns of the monthly *Jaag*.

While this was fresh in the public mind the GKARC questioned the validity of the continuance of the Executive Board of the GKA for eight years. GKARC had individuals who had claims to positions and role in all the Konkani bodies and organisations by virtue of their long time organisational and creative contribution. *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* (KBM) and *Konkani Lekhak Sangh* were the two organisations which had been demanding representation in the Akademi since 1988. KBM as a pioneer institution ought to have a permanent place in the General Council of the Akademi but could not get it though most of those nominated to the Akademi were involved in the KBM in the past and were aware of the prime position of the *Mandal* in the Konkani movement. The only plausible explanation for the *Mandal* being ignored in this respect is that it was led by others (read non-GSBs) during the period of the formation of the Akademi. In later years (particularly after Adv. Uday Bhembre became the GKA President) the issue of representation to KBM was revived but the GKA leadership wanted the KBM to be on par with other organisations and to suggest the names of two individuals of which the Akademi would select one to represent the KBM. The KBM president got himself authorized by the General Body to be the sole nominee. This had the background of ego clashes at individual level within the GSB fold, probably due to generation gap. It was also a case of mixing of issues

and interests in the Konkani leadership within the GSB circles<sup>16</sup>.

In the ad-hoc Board of the GKA initially nominated by the government (1985) there was only one non-GSB Hindu among signatories to the Memorandum as he was considered manageable because of his quiet nature and academic background<sup>17</sup>. He was projected as the leader of the KPA to give the organisation its *Bahujan Samaj* identity. During the revamping movement of the GKARC he stood by the GKA leadership but soon after the revamping he had to face the wrath of the GSB section in the Akademi. The Presidentship of the Akademi remained with Purushottam Kakodkar for the period of fourteen years till his death. The Vice-President's chair was occupied by Dr. Manohar Rai SarDessai till the revamping in 1993. It was taken over by Pundalik Naik, the only *Bahujan Samaj* member in the original team. His ideas to popularise the GKA activities and make its programmes broad-based led to greater involvement of youth from masses in Konkani work. But in the second term his interests clashed with the views of the GKA leadership mainly Kakodkar.

To check his influence the GSB leadership used another member of the same caste, N.Shivdas and forced Pundalik Naik to resign out of frustration. The issues of legal status and standing of the Vice-President were debated in the public

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<sup>16</sup> . The KBM and GKA were both led by the GSB individuals as Presidents. Raju Naik, a professional journalist who headed the KBM since 1994, was made to work as Executive editor under Adv. Bhembre, a practicing lawyer, who was designated as the Chief Editor of the only Konkani daily in Devanagari script (*Sunaparant*). Naik felt that the attitude of Bhembre was self-centred. Bhembre as the GKA president asked the KBM to send nominations for membership of the GKA General Council which Naik did but with only one name (that of his own) instead of two as prescribed in the procedure. Naik insisted on his name being accepted but the GKA did not oblige. The clash of interest between Adv. Bhembre and Raju Naik had its genesis in daily *Sunaparant* from where it spilled over to GKA and KBM.

<sup>17</sup> . Pundalik Naik as a leading writer of outstanding merit was also seen as a polite young man ready to learn from others. His rural background and education in Marathi medium made him a conscious silent worker, which the GSB leadership appreciated.

during this period of conflict and his motives were questioned. It was the ambition of Pundalik Naik that was seen as a threat and Kakodkar got Adv. Uday Bhembre appointed as his successor even though Adv. Bhembre was not even in the General Council of the Akademi. After the demise of Purushottam Kakodkar in 1996 his successor Uday Bhembre, who had been very close to Pundalik Naik in the past, saw to it that Naik would not be in the picture. Though the GKA had its new provisions for constituting the General Council with representation to organisations, those seen as a threat to the set pattern were excluded by manouevring and manipulation of certain rules and procedures, making use of the legal expertise and acumen of the GSB leaders. For example, *Thomas Stephens Konkani Kendra* – TSKK – a Jesuit institution for language study and research did not find a place in the Akademi set up for this purpose. Also, KBM could find a place only after the individuals of choice of the established GSB leadership gained its control.

### **Sahitya Akademi Awards**

Annual Awards to literary works in Konkani given since 1976 became a bone of contention between major regional groups and script users. With a clear control over the decisions with regard to Konkani in the Sahitya Akademi from the time of recognition Goan Hindu leadership of Konkani, made up entirely of the GSBs, rewarded the writers in Devanagari script – all Goans either from Goa or from Bombay – for the first six years. A writer with only one published book in

Devanagari script to his credit<sup>18</sup> received the award, while many who wrote in the two other scripts – Kannada and Roman – were not considered in spite of good work over the years, only because of the script factor. There was an instance of book published by a Goan poet specifically for the award<sup>19</sup>.

The Kannada script writers in Konkani found this provision of 'script' unjust and raised the question 'whether the language was recognised or the script' (*Amar Konkani* January 1993). Though they made a representation to the Akademi against the script criterion they could not make any impact. The first seven winners of the annual awards belonged to the first line of the Goan Konkani writers – all GSBs. The second line of writers in Konkani followed before the first ever Mangalorean poet (settled in Bombay) was considered for the award in 1985 after he brought out his collection of poems in two scripts – Kannada and Devanagari – to satisfy the criteria. This was made easy because of his domicile in Bombay and being identified with the KBM there. The greatest of the Konkani poets from Mangalore - *Chafra* - could make it only in 1989 after his book of poems was transliterated in Devanagari for publication in Goa. Efforts of the Mangalore group to see their veteran V. J. P. Saldanha ('*Khadap*' to his readers) in the list did not succeed during the 25 years i.e. 1977-2001. The transliterated

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<sup>18</sup> . Dr. Dattaram Sukhthankar had a collection of essays which was his only book till then. He is not a regular writer, except for occasional contributions to Diwali special number of *Jaag* and AIR. Mumbai.

<sup>19</sup> . R.V.Pandit, (who had a typical envy against Dr. ManoharRai SarDessai for the recognition and appreciation the latter received ) had his book of poems '*Darya Gazota*' prepared for the award from his earlier Roman script publication of the same title. This was the same as done by Dr. SarDessai in *Pussollim*.

version of one of his novels was brought out as a new edition specially with the objective of seeking the award but was considered ineligible to fulfil the criteria of time-frame. The novel could not be considered for the award on technical grounds and the feeling of stepmotherly treatment to Kannada script Konkani grew further (interview – Monsgr. D'Souza). The controlling group was keen on the script issue and representations from the Kannada users to allow their entries for the awards for a few years were rejected. But at the same time books published in two scripts were considered. Also these leaders' keenness to silence the Mangalore group was evident in their preference to Chafra over any Goan writer in Roman script in transliterating the works to Devanagari. This hurt and insulted the Roman-using group in Goa (Interview -Tomazinho Cardoso).

In the matter of awards certain factors became quite obvious. It was not the quality or merit in the strict sense that counted. As the awards were given looking at the contribution to the movement, rather than the literary work itself, those writing in other scripts felt that at least a few of their writers deserved some consideration in the matter. Though the seniors in the movement made repeated appeals for more of prose and serious writing as against the predominance of poetry (Kelekar in *Jaag* 19 ), it was poetry that received the award in more than 50% of the cases<sup>20</sup>. Also there was not a single year when the award was not given for want of quality or merit. In other major languages, there had been

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<sup>20</sup> . Out of the 25 awards till 2001, 13 were for poetry. While 3 went to collections of essays, only 2 each were awards for novels and travellogues, 4 went to short stories, and 1 to a collection of one-act plays.

occasions when the awards were not given (Rao, 1985). But in case of Konkani, the argument was that it was the amount (money) that mattered and as it was the state fund, there was no reason to deprive writers of the same. In certain cases, it was the attitude of implicit protest against the supposed GSB 'tendency' to monopolise the awards that decided the winner<sup>21</sup>.

Literary awards were sometimes seen as the recognition for contribution to the language movement in general and balancing acts in terms of regional considerations also figured in some cases. All such things led to some amount of injustice to genuine works of merit in a few instances<sup>22</sup>. Because of the approach of sharing the spoils literary merit were given a back seat. This gave some substance to the Goan Marathi protagonists' observations that the literary and language movement in the name of Konkani was a ploy to attract people in support of a partisan cause, and also that anything in Konkani, irrespective of literary value or creative worth, could win a prize (*Konkani Diwali* 1999). In case

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<sup>21</sup> . '*Gomanchal Te Himachal*' a travelogue by Dilip Borkar was awarded for 1995, against a collection of poems by Shankar Ramani, a senior poet known also for his Marathi poems. The latter was favoured by poet Madhav Borkar, a member of the jury. The non-GSB Goan member of the panel – Ramesh Veluskar – himself a Konkani poet and lover of Ramani's poetry' favoured the travelogue with the support of the third member (a Catholic)-college teacher from Karwar-who 'could not differentiate between the two works in Devanagari'. The awarded work mattered less than the writer's social position and his 'contribution' to language movement. In his personal interaction Ramesh Veluskar-confirmed that his decision was guided by the resentment towards the GSB attitude of taking others for granted. Madhav Borkar. regretted this 'undesirable' approach. (Based on personal discussions with the two in course of interviews).

<sup>22</sup> . The short story collection *Rudra* by Gajanan Jog (Goa) could not make it as also R.S.Bhaskar's collection of poems (Kerala) though they reached the final round of selection on two occasions. The literary worth of both these works and contribution of both the writers was also known.

of Konkani writings in Karnataka, the grievance of neglect became less vocal after the formation of The *Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy*, which started rewarding the publications in Kannada script after 1996. Also the policy of equal consideration to all scripts by Dr.T. M. A. Pai Foundation for their literary awards eased the situation. Over the years, critics of the script monopoly have been making attempts to get their works transliterated to Devanagari for being considered for the awards. This, however, is true only of Kannada script writers in Konkani, whereas the Roman script writers who are the rightful descendants of the pioneers of Konkani have not yet figured in the list of awardees. Their script is their handicap, though their work for the language is unique and historic in more than one sense. The Catholics in Goa and Bombay have their Konkani bodies and organisations, celebrations and affiliations but in official terms they remain non-entities on account of their script. Their issues and concerns have been voiced through institutions such as *Thomas Stephens Konknni Kendra* and *Dalgado Academy*.

#### **Thomas Stephens Konknni Kendra (TSKK) and Dalgado Academy:**

Though *Konkani Bhasha Mandal* (KBM) as peoples' organisation and Goa Konkani Akademi (GKA) as an autonomous body established by the state government have been functioning for the cause of Konkani language, literature and culture, their stress is on Devanagari as the real and official image of Konkani. Led and guided by those who have grown under the tradition of Devanagari, these institutions have an evasive approach to other scripts of

Konkani and to the work of Konkani done in other scripts. Devanagari is in use for Konkani in Goa and Bombay, but only within a section of the Konkani community. Other communities/ regions identified with scripts other than Devanagari deserve attention in the study of Konkani and such study needs a more open and flexible approach. To strengthen this, there have been two significant attempts – one on the part of Jesuits in the form of TSKK and the other, short-lived but note-worthy, by the Roman script votaries in the name of *Dalgado Academy*.

TSKK was established in early 1980s and run by Goa Jesuits with the principal aim of ‘the scientific study and promotion of Konkani language, literature and culture’. With well-equipped library and well thought out projects on different aspects of study and research, the *Kendra* has been recognised officially by GKA. The staff members of TSKK work on different committees and are involved in the work of different cultural bodies and associations as their members. Though methodical in their work and scientific in their approach to the study of Konkani, they have been criticized and avoided by the Goan Konkani leadership.

TSKK has published rules of Konkani orthography and grammar, some old Konkani literature edited by the scholars working in the *Kendra*, books for use in pre-primary schools and handbooks of Konkani for teachers etc. The two scholars Dr. Mathew Almeida and Dr. Pratap Naik have their research work in linguistics with special reference to Konkani and have attempted to analyse the ongoing language activities on the basis of their knowledge and experience. In

this they have often pointed to deficiencies in academic work done by some Goans without adequate qualifications, necessary specialisation or proper study, which has caused distress within the established leadership or the academia among them. Genuine academic questions on the work related to linguistics of Konkani have been responded by some people through the press, acquiring pen-names to criticise these scholars, and Dr. Pratap Naik in particular. TSKK has been consistent in its work of popularising Konkani, linguistic and literary research and training teachers, research-minded youth. Their objection to the idea of 'One Script, One Language, One Community' on sociological and scientific basis is well known. All this has led to Goan Konkani leadership among Hindus, particularly GSBs, keeping away from the institution, avoiding it in the task of expanding the Konkani activities, and encouraging isolation in the academic field of Konkani.

As the idea of 'One script, one language, one community' has been made into a mission statement over the years by the established Goan leadership, those using other scripts for Konkani have attempted to express their disapproval in their own way. *Dalgado Konkani Academy* was one such expression. It was formed by a group of Konkani writers, journalists, priests, teachers such as Tomazinho Cardoso, Fr. Freddy D'Costa, who used Roman script for writing the language and others such as Fr. Pratap Naik, who did not agree with one script principle. Some members, mainly the Mangalorean priests working in Goa, were well versed with all the three major scripts used for Konkani. Their concern for the Catholics, and sense of loss because of insistence on Devanagari alone,

prompted them to initiate organise efforts to assert the alternative view on script. In their bid to project the Roman side, establish the fact of the historic role of that script in Goa and its practical relevance for a large section of Konkani community they brought together the like minded people under the banner of the *Dalgado Academy* named after Mons. Sebastiao Rodolfo Dalgado, a Goan priest and lexicographer of late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This new formation had the background of the amendment proposed to the Official Language Act by Luizinho Faleiro, which was rejected at the early stage. The amendment suggested a time frame of 25 years to be allowed to the Goan Catholics for their switch-over to Devanagari. His proposal for the continuance of the Roman script till such switch-over had not been entertained. The Roman script users were encouraged by TSKK to take the organisational course and Dalgado Academy came into being. Though it was formed out of genuine love for Konkani and in the interest of a large section it could not continue for long and most of its promoters now avoid speaking about it in detail (Interview – Tomazinho Cardoso, Fr. Pratap Naik). As the attempt was seen as a challenge to Devanagari the entire GSB leadership of Konkani was against the idea and express their inability to recall any details. The Academy was formed with the objective of procuring for the Roman script its due. With the quick and silent exit of the Academy from the language scene within a year after its formation the established Hindu leadership of Konkani was saved of another move to stress Devanagari and to undermine the role of other scripts. But within their own language bodies, they had lot of complexities in their interrelations. against their proclaimed claim of single script as the sure solution to all the major

problems faced by Konkani. Konkani Bhasha Mandal of Margao and Goa Konkani Akademi of Panaji were established and nurtured by the GSB stalwarts in the Konkani movement but over the years they had problems which were born not out of script differences but out of other socio-economic issues that confront organisations and institutions run on democratic lines.

### **Konkani Bhasha Mandal (KBM) and Goa Konkani Akademi (GKA):**

While considering the final phase of the struggle for constitutional position to Konkani a peculiar situation of institutional contest can be noticed within the movement in Goa.. KBM as a pioneer Konkani institution prepared the ground for the larger language battle in Goa. The first two decades of its functioning under the hostile MGP rule proved its need. Konkani acquired the space in education at all levels due to efforts of the KBM. Its members played a crucial role in ensuring a place for Konkani at the school, college and university levels of education. Communication and media considered Konkani in a positive way because of KBM. But the formation of the GKA by the government affected the standing of the KBM in the eyes of the state. Though the GKA members were the ex-functionaries of the KBM their approach to this parent body changed. The KBM leadership passed into the hands of the non-GSB Hindus around the same time as the formation of the GKA. The top leadership of KBM comprising of GSBs

moved en masse to the GKA established by the state government<sup>23</sup>. The emergence of young non-GSB writers and leaders - such as Pundalik Naik, N. Shivdas, Tanaji Halarnkar - over the 70's made it imperative to recognise their presence in the organisational set up of the Konkani movement. The first non-GSB president of the KBM in this phase was Felicio Cardoso, the pro-Nagari Catholic free from the church control, a freedom fighter with socialist ideas and a journalist turned teacher of Konkani. The transition to non-GSB Hindu leadership was intervened by his term.

As a result of the establishment of the GKA by the state government, the role and status of KBM as a representative body of Konkani language was affected. The state support to Konkani would now be available only through the GKA. Though KBM had not been receiving government funding for a long time, due to non-compliance of certain statutory and technical requirements<sup>24</sup>, it had the right to ask for state support for specific activities or projects of language promotion. But with the formation of the GKA the state government linked all matters related to Konkani with this body under the state control. KBM had its representative on the state run Goa Kala Academy prior to the establishment of

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<sup>23</sup> . In the first Executive Board of the GKA, three of the six members residing in Goa viz. Shri. Chandrakant Keni, Dr. Manoharrao Sardesai and Adv. Uday Bhembre were the erstwhile KBM presidents, the fourth was Shri. Ravindra Kelekar, the seniormost writer (advisor to KBM and Konkani movement as a whole) representing Konkani language on the Executive Board of the Sahitya Akademi at that time and the fifth was his contemporary Shri. Pandurang Bhangji, a Konkani poet. It was said that MLA of Margao and the GSB leader Babu Naik was the person involved in this formation along with Chandrakant Keni.

<sup>24</sup> . KBM had received government grants during the tenure of Adv. Uday Bhembre as the President in early 1980s when Congress came to power. The same was to be matched by certain amount from the KBM sources. But instead of that, KBM spent the amount and could not submit the accounts as required under the government rules. Further grants were not available from the government, though accounts were submitted much later and attempts were made to restart the government support. But it was not revived. Same thing had happened in case of grants received for the publication of literary anthologies of Konkani: the work on which was completed after a gap of almost a decade.

the GKA. The same was now allotted to the GKA on behalf of the Konkani language organisations/ bodies.

The new non-GSB leadership of the KBM had no access to state resources but had a challenging task of running the organisation which had no resource base of its own. The young workers managed to build the resources through programmes such as *Konkani Shikshak Sanad* (Teachers' Training Programme) and completed the pending projects of publication. The government support for the KBM library was received under relevant scheme of assistance. The past liabilities of the KBM were also cleared.

The leading seniors - GSBs controlling the KBM affairs till then - who had found place in the GKA considered the new leadership of KBM as ineffective and often remained away from the KBM, particularly during the tenure of the non-GSB writers as KBM President. The absence of these seniors at the tri-decadal celebrations of the KBM in 1992 was interpreted as 'boycott' and discussed in the press by the activists (Tanaji Halarnkar in *Sunaparant* in the first week of Oct. '92, Damodar Mauzo in *Sunaparant* dtd. 18<sup>th</sup> October 1992). Later years saw some 'new' elements (with little or no real involvement or attachment to the KBM in the pst) occupying the positions of power using the 'laxity in the election process'<sup>25</sup> (Interview – Tanaji Halarnkar, Pundalik Naik) supported by the

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<sup>25</sup> . Sushrut Martins became the KBM President with the support of members from Panaji. He was a student activist but not a recognised Konkani worker. He could make it as a youth from North Goa and a Catholic supported by most of the active workers and writers from Panaji and Mapusa under the strategy planned by Shri. Karmali, who led and advised the Panaji group against Margao group of seniors.

‘secularist’ GSB individual whose claims to organisational authority were partially thwarted by the senior KBM leadership in Margao. The KBM elections in the past were a cool affair with poor turn out at the General Body meetings, and leading to the ‘unopposed’ elections of the Executive Committees. It was only after the formation of the GKA that the Panaji group found opportunity to take positions in the KBM.

Konkani Lekhak Sangh was born as a parallel organisation of Konkani writers and activists predominantly from Panaji. The guidance and support came from Mr. Nagesh Karmali who had problems with the hegemony of ‘Margao people’ in the KBM. The young writers mostly non-GSBs who were supported by Karmali in their literary activities came together under this *Sangh* (Interview – N. Shivdas, Pundalik Naik). It worked more as a protest group or pressure group against KBM and later sought representation to the GKA. In the case of KBM such representation ought to have been automatic, as it was the pioneering organisation or a parent body of Konkani in Goa for over two decades, but was never considered seriously during the formation of the GKA and became a matter of individual confrontations in later years.

The revamping of the Akademi in 1993, as per the court directives in a case filed by the GKARC, was followed in 1994 by the take-over of the KBM by a team led by Raju Naik, GSB youth from Margao. The decision making in the KBM had shifted out of the direct involvement of senior group in Margao for nearly eight years (1986-1994). With Raju Naik as the President, this was expected to change. The GKA revamping process had also caused realignment of

forces within the Konkani movement. The revamped GKA continued under Purushottam Kakodkar, the Vice-presidency now going to Pundalik Naik for his 'service' to Konkani. By the end of the tenure of the Board it was found that this representative of the Hindu masses in the GKA was asking for more, which the traditional GSB leadership could not entertain. The secular and undisputed leader of Konkani such as Uday Bhembre, a strong supporter of Naik in the past, who was considered as a balancing factor between the young and the old groups, was transformed into the pro-GSB strategist and later found Pundalik Naik's demands wrong. Purushottam Kakodkar, in his attempt to weaken Naik, decided to forgo his own monthly honorarium, thereby depriving Naik of that benefit. Another term for Kakodkar was secured because of his Delhi links, in spite of efforts of Pundalik Naik to get himself promoted. The tussle between Naik and Kakodkar continued till such stage when aged Kakodkar declined in health. In this situation he resigned from the post of President. Pundalik Naik continued as the Vice-president. As Kakodkar favoured Bhembre as his successor and made sure that the state government nominated Bhembre to the post after him (even though Bhembre was not involved in the work of the Akademi in any capacity during this term)<sup>26</sup>, Pundalik Naik tendered his resignation as the Vice-president.

The GSB leadership of both GKA and KBM continued after 1996, with Bhembre replacing Kakodkar in GKA and Raju Naik getting the second term as the KBM President. But the individual interests of these two soured the relations

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<sup>26</sup> . When the Executive Board was being constituted for that term, Bhembre was approached with a proposal that he would be taken as a member but the latter refused, says Pundalik Naik.

between the institutions. Also the two Konkani leaders representing two generations competed for the electoral opportunities with a Congress ticket in Margao. The KBM under the young team took initiative to rope in youth from the masses with Youth Festival of its own and also tried to construct the Konkani Bhavan to house its office and the school. Earlier efforts in that direction under the non-GSB leadership of KBM had poor response, but with the GSB individual in command, resources were managed and the project costing over Rs. 25 lacs was completed within a year. By 1998 the elections to the KBM turned into a political battle on prestige issues. KBM platform was used to attack the GKA openly. Three consecutive terms for Raju Naik as KBM president led to constant confrontation with the GKA and persistent demands for direct government assistance without GKA intervention. Youth force mobilised by the KBM through the annual activities like *Goa Yuwa Mahotsav* was perhaps intended to be used to exhibit the anti-seniors sentiment and resentment towards them. But the frontranking leaders in the movement managed to turn the tide and get the key mobilisers on their side. These key mobilisers such as Sandesh Prabhudesai, Shridhar Kamat, Prashant Naik, with the background of students' movement guided by leftist ideas, found the appeal and approach of the seniors (considered as secular minded) more valid and sincere. This realignment in a way helped in getting a secular and democratic face to the movement to replace the caste image under the GSBs. The KBM leadership on the other hand tried to bring the Catholic section closer through different activities. They found the professional theatre activists (users of Roman script and essentially catering to Catholic

audience) quite willing to get some recognition from the 'mainstream'/ 'official' section that KBM represented. Some active elements of the Konkani movement from Mangalore were brought in to create a feeling of initiative for broad-basing the movement. During the process of completion of the *Konkani Bhavan* there was a suggestion from a prominent GSB fund raiser to form a Trust in the name of the *Bhavan*.

The moves on the part of the KBM president to challenge the hegemony of the seniors found support from a small section of the *Bahujan Samaj* led by Pundalik Naik, whose attempt to gain control of the GKA had failed. As a result of this the KBM biennial elections started being fought under the rival panels, as against the unopposed elections in the past when hardly 10% of the members attended the General Body meetings and the nominations received from them for the positions would sometimes be less than the posts to be filled<sup>27</sup>. In the post -'94 scenario the enrolment and quality of membership were guided by the electoral considerations<sup>28</sup>. With re-election of the KBM leadership in 1998 the anti-GKA stand hardened further.

Also the All India Konkani *Parishad's* 'closed' character was sought to be rectified through the involvement of youth. To achieve this, the XIV *Akhil Bharatiya Konkani Sahitya Sammelan* (All India Konkani Literary Conference) 1998 was organised at Margao between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> January 1998

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<sup>27</sup> . In 1990, for instance, the General Body that elected the Executive Committee for the two year tenure, was attended by only 30 members and only ten nominations were received for the 12 positions in the Committee.

<sup>28</sup> . There were charges that the membership was given to those who had nothing to do with Konkani language and literature or the KBM and its objectives. These votes in block were used to seek re-election in the face of limited genuine voter turn out, especially in 1998.

to link it with the *Goa Yuwa Mahotsav* (Goa Youth Festival) held on 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> January making it a *Konkani Saptak* (Konkani Week) between 19<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> January by adding a childrens' get-together on 19<sup>th</sup> January and a book exhibition with a seminar on 22<sup>nd</sup> January. But the national literary event did not find the response of youth who had responded in large numbers to their cultural fest just two days earlier. The hopes of building support base of youth for Konkani were belied, the plan of making the *Sammelan* successful in Goa had a limited success.

The KBM president Raju Naik in his third term had a team that had only one non-GSB member in the Executive Committee. The arbitrary behaviour of the group was criticised openly by some sections. The *Parishad* session was planned in Belgaum. GKA had moved out of the phase of conflict by replacing Pundalik Naik with N. Shivdas, of the same caste. But the relations between GKA and KBM had continued to be strained. The key mobilisers of youth were finding the KBM functioning increasingly autocratic. Communication between the different bodies working for Konkani was becoming problematic. In this situation Pundalik Naik as President of the XXII *Parishad* at Belgaum came out openly against the attitude of expediency and hegemonic tendencies in the movement.

The attempt by the KBM President Raju Naik for re-election of his panel for the fourth consecutive term in April 2000 led to open confrontation. GKA President Uday Bhembre, who was attacked by the KBM leadership on various counts, managed to forge the unity of different sections, projecting another uncontroversial secular-minded GSB writer – Damodar Mauzo - as the prospective KBM leader. Elections were fought with unprecedented interest

resulting in the record turn out of members for voting. In the confrontation between the forces that worked behind the KBM and the GKA the apex national body of the language i.e. All India Konkani *Parishad* also came to be used as the official platform to challenge its own 'policy'.

### ***Parishad Presidents' Resentment:***

The *Parishad* had the five main objectives at its foundation. The script issue was relegated to the background all the time on the basis of one of these objectives i. e., 'to use Devanagari - the original/ natural and national/ Indian script for Konkani'. The resolution, 'Devanagari script should be used for Konkani', at the first Konkani *Parishad* in 1939, added to making Devanagari *the* script of Konkani. In the successive *Parishads*, and subsequently the sessions of the *Parishad*, in different regions the issue of script was made into a non-issue through the functionaries and experts/ authorities who made a passing reference to multilitteralism but stressed on the authenticity, necessity and naturalness of Devanagari for Konkani.

In some instances the acknowledgement of fact was clearly evident. Santoshkumar Gulvady in his article 'A Script for Konkani: Should We Fight?' (*Mogrem Parishad Souvenir*, 1989) said, 'When Devanagari was adopted for Konkani, it was thought that a major problem was over. In reality a series of complications developed'. He felt that, 'let people write Konkani in any script they choose. They should be recognised as Konkani people. Let the script not divide us.' As a responsible member of the organising host institution and an

insider of the Manipal Pai establishment his fear of 'script split' further hampering 'the much needed development' has substance. This was realised in the medium of instruction controversy in Goa in which the dividing lines were getting strengthened by communal rift. The 'vertical split' on 'a trivial point of script' culminating in 'a slow death dose to the language' was to be avoided by setting 'a deadline to resolve our complications of script ...by A.D. 2000'. At the same time 'every Konkani person should get an equal opportunity to participate in building our *Mai Bhas*'. He does realise that recognising 'only 8% of Konkani speakers as real Konkanis' (on the basis of script) was for all practical purposes 'a death blow to a living, vibrant and expressive language' (Gulvady in **Mogrem**, 1989). The business acumen of Pais in running the Kannada weekly '*Taranga*' under the editorship of Gulvady to make it the most circulated and popular magazine in the language justifies his stand on script. But the ambiguity ingrained in the whole argument of an accomplished journalist seemed to exhibit the balancing act.

The more assertive and academically strong position was taken by the President of the XXI session of the *Parishad* in Mumbai (1997). In his Presidential address Dr. William Madtha, a linguist by training and a disciple of Dr. S.M.Katre, distinguished between unity and uniformity to say that what was being proposed and promoted in the name of uniformity was detrimental to the language. He spoke of pluralism and contested the imposition of script and standardisation by a particular style, meaning Goan Hindu Konkani (Madtha, 1997). Stressing that script could not be equated with language or literature he

placed the creation of Konkani script at the top of Konkani language planning. He hoped to see transliteration gaining momentum with increasing use of computers and suggested the continuance of production and publication of literature in different scripts. The assessment of ground reality regarding the readership, popularity, quality in different scripts through field studies should decide the script and standard form for Konkani, he opined (*Sunaparant*, 26<sup>th</sup> Jan.1997). The stand of Dr. Madtha as the President of the *Parishad* was seen by a Goan writer and a leading member of the *Parishad*, Nagesh Karmali, as 'conservative' and 'status quoist'. Dr. Madtha's approach was seen as 'advocacy of the specific Konkani section of Mangalore' and contrary to the long established principle of the *Parishad* viz. 'One Language, One Script, One Literature'. He was also reminded by Karmali that in 1939 it was the Konkani speaking leadership from Karnataka, more than that of Goa or Bombay, that had forcefully led the move to adopt Devanagari as the authentic script for Konkani. Citing the sacrifice of the Goan users - of the Roman script on one hand and of the Marathi language on the other - the larger good was shown as the end. Kerala Konkani was seen as coming closer to Goa Konkani after the adoption of Devanagari in place of Malayalam script there. The attempt of Mr. Karmali in his article was to show that the script issue was already decided and further discussion on that count would perpetuate the confusion and chaos experienced by other languages such as Santali having different scripts in use (*Sunaparant*, 4<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1997).

The very next session of the *Parishad* (XXII session at Belgaum in Karnataka) held in January 1999 was also marked for the dissenting voice of the

President from the *Parishad* platform. Mr. Pundalik Naik, whose involvement in the *Parishad* dated back to 1974, was selected as the President because of his own claim<sup>29</sup>. The KBM President Raju Naik, who worked as the *Parishad* General Secretary, favoured the candidature of Naik as he found in him an ally to counter the forces that worked under the seniors in the Movement. Naik in his Presidential address criticised the GSB hegemony and their attitude of exploitation and monopolisation (Presidential Address, 1999). Speaking on behalf of the Hindu masses he made observations about the approach of the Goan Catholics towards Konkani and concluded that they have taken a divorce from Konkani, admitting openly that no planning was done for the Catholics to shift over to Devanagari when they gave up the Roman script. He held the main section of Konkani movement (meaning the Goan GSB leaders) responsible for this and lamented the fact that the Catholics had political leaders of Konkani but not the literary ones. His observation that the youth power was ready to work for Konkani but the leadership was 'scared of this force' (Presidential Address, 1999: 17), referred to his open confrontation in the GKA and the persistent clash of interests seen in the strained relationship of the young President of the KBM with the veterans of the movement.

On his part Pundalik Naik joined forces with the KBM President Raju Naik with a view to raise pressure on the state to implement the Official language

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<sup>29</sup> . According to Mr. Naik he should have been given the Presidentship of the *Sahitya Sammelan* at Kochi in 1996, as was desired by the organisers there. But Nagesh Karmali managed to get it, and there was disappointment among the leading organisers such as K. Gokuldas Prabhu. Naik also felt that denial of opportunity to him had its reflection in poor attendance at the event in Kochi.

Act. A meeting was convened at Margao on the Official Language Day (4<sup>th</sup> February 1999)<sup>30</sup> in which an Ad-hoc committee for the implementation of the OL was formed.

### **State Policy and Activists' Response:**

The language and literature were projected primarily as cultural resources of the language community at large. The movement seeking social status and political standing for the language speakers was, however, identified with smaller sections. All through the three decades after Goa liberation the reins of popular movements of Konkani remained with the GSBs, who roped in the individuals from the Hindu masses and those from the Catholics for specific purposes. In the sixties the Opinion Poll was won with the whole-hearted support of the Catholics. The Sahitya Akademi recognition was ensured by showcasing the regional and religious forces in unison, justifying the claims of literary standard with numerical strength that included users of the four major scripts for Konkani coming from all the states on the west coast of South India. The OL agitation was made broadbased with the involvement of the Hindu *Bahujan Samaj* and the Catholic masses. The real test of the Konkani movement was to be in the state of Goa, where the political worth of the language was to be tested.

With the conferment of Statehood on Goa vide the 57<sup>th</sup> amendment to

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<sup>30</sup> . Since the Official Language Bill making Konkani the OL was passed in the legislative assembly of Goa, Daman and Diu on 4<sup>th</sup> February, 1987, this day came to be celebrated every year as the OL Day through the Goa Konkani Akademi. Seminars, discussions are arranged to review the status of OL, discuss ways and means to speed up implementation of the Act.

the Constitution in 1987, the language policy of the state government became vital in terms of local administration, school education, democratic participation. The OL Act passed by the legislature of the Union Territory (that included the pockets of Gujarati speaking Daman and Diu) was questioned by those who found the provisions relating to Marathi unjust. Marathi side, on the other hand, tried to prove the Act as irrelevant, as it was passed by the legislative assembly of the Union Territory and not the new state. The OL Act satisfied no one: Catholics did not get the Roman script though Konkani was the OL, majority of Hindus who read and wrote Marathi felt deceived due to the ambiguous status accorded to the language (use of Marathi allowed for the purposes for which Konkani would be used, which implied 'equal status') in the Act. The Act provided for the issue of specific Official Notifications for the use of OL in specific areas of administration. The state used this provision and issued two separate Notifications making it mandatory for the government authorities to reply to the correspondence from the public in the language used by the individual senders (either Konkani or Marathi). The orders were ineffective because neither the administration nor the people were keen to change over from English. The need and prospects of emigration had made English the medium of school education for over half a century, central administration for the first twenty five years of liberation had based the administration firmly in English. People of Goa, particularly the youth in the post-liberation phase, had to make hard cultural choices. On the one hand, they valued identity that they could locate through language and culture of their own, but on the other, there were economic

compulsions that gave primacy to English as a cultural asset on which rested the opportunities for migration and mobility. This dilemma informed the public choices and demands during the integrative phase of Goa. Statehood led to political instability in which the language issue came up time and again as a handy tool to swing the public opinion or distract the popular attention from the serious economic or constitutional issues. The exception to this was the OL training programme for the government functionaries initiated in 1990 during the tenure of Churchill Alemao as the minister in charge, followed by the purchase of Devanagari typewriters for use in administration. Neither of these were put to use and the OL Act remains a unfulfilled promise.

The non-implementation of the Act has figured in the press writings and Konkani gatherings occasionally (Khandeparkar, 2000; Mauzo, 1996). The Goa Konkani Akademi has in its annual calendar the two days marked for celebration – the Constitutional Recognition Day (20<sup>th</sup> August) and the OL Day (4<sup>th</sup> February), which are used to discuss the achievements of the movement and apathy of the state. The Akademi as a state funded autonomous body finds its hands tied and the movement is in doldrums. Those who led the movement in the past have either occupied some official position in the Akademi or are running the KBM. With no effective dissenting voice and nothing more to demand from the state activists and leaders are not sure of the status of the movement. The OL cell created in the state administration is not equipped even to enforce the maiden order issued so far with regard to implementation of the OL Act (*Sunaparant*, 4<sup>th</sup> Feb.1997).

The Advisory Committee of the cell was constituted with a number of Konkani writers as its members. The non-functional committee remained on paper and the members, unable to get the government authorities to activate it, finally resigned from the committee in anguish. While the top level administrators – All India Services people – were not serious about its implementation, the local politicians made it a tool of pacifying Konkani protagonists<sup>31</sup>.

Goa Konkani Akademi organised a seminar on OL on the OL Day in 1997 and submitted its recommendations to the state as desired by the then Minister for OL and the Chief Secretary. The Plan of Action was suggested but it remained unattended to. The issue was given a boost around the Belgaum session of the *Parishad* under Pundalik Naik. At the inaugural function of the *Yuwa Mahotsav* on 7<sup>th</sup> Jan. 1999 Naik reminded the then CM about the implementation of the OL Act and specified the deadline of the OL day (4<sup>th</sup> Feb. '99) for the same. In his Presidential address at the Belgaum session (15<sup>th</sup> Jan.'99) he reiterated that the time to wait was over. The OL day that year was used as an occasion for a get-together in *Konkani Bhavan* and a committee called the Official Language Implementation (Ad-hoc) Committee was formed to prepare the blueprint for the implementation of the OL Act. This committee organised a convention on 16<sup>th</sup> May '99 in Margao, which resolved to protect and promote Goans' identity, culture and economic interests, to put an end to the language controversy, to ensure the optimum utilisation of Goan resources in the interest of

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<sup>31</sup> . One of the top bureaucrats was quoted as saying that implementing the use of Konkani was a sure way to pack them off. (Prمود Khandeparkar in **Gomantak Times** 25.1.1999 ). The Ministers for OL year after year assured publicly that the Directorate of OL would be made functional and Konkani would get its due.

Goans and to stop further erosion of Goan identity and culture. To fulfill these objectives *Goa Hit Rakhan Manch* (Forum for protection of Goan interests) was formed in the same meeting. This *Manch* worked as a pressure group in respect of certain economic interests like government employment where knowledge of OL was to be verified under the specific provisions. But this exercise could not sustain the tempo for long. Most of those who spearheaded the move were made to take up the responsibility of the KBM after the elections to the body in 2000. While the move was initiated by Pundalik Naik, who had challenged the established GSB leadership openly from the platform of the apex body of Konkani language, in the course of its formalisation and consolidation the focus was shifted from the implementation of the OL to the larger Goan interest, which amounted to sidelining of the main issue. This was seen as a wise move considering the stalemate created in the social life by the language controversy. Those in the *Manch* wanted to convince the Marathi side that they were willing to work together for the economic well being of Goans. This was not easy to accept, in the opinion of the Marathi protagonists.

In the year 2000 the issue of OL was raked up in the state legislature by the two Hindu majority political parties - MGP and BJP. Two different Bills seeking amendments to the existing Act were proposed, prompting the Konkani side to raise their voices of protest. The show of strength this time was to pressurise the government to maintain status quo. The strength mobilised from the Hindu masses through the GKA-sponsored literary schemes, KBM's popular activities for youth over the years was exhibited on the streets of Panaji, the

capital town on the eve of the commencement of the monsoon session of the legislative assembly of Goa in 2000. This was the first time that a public demonstration of Konkani force was managed without direct involvement of the church and the Catholics. The proposed Bills were allowed to lapse after the political objective of embarrassing and cornering the government was achieved, followed by the BJP-supported government coming to power. The issue was forgotten after the BJP formed its coalition government under the first GSB chief minister in Goa. The occasion of the completion of 125 years of Shennai Goembab's birth was used to seek government support to the idea of celebrating the year as '*Asmitai Vors*' (The year of identity). Environmental issue like 'Save Madei' (a popular movement against the plan of damming upstream in Karnataka the lifeline of Goa – Mandovi river) was linked to the celebration of this year (and through it to Konkani language movement) which invited criticism of the Marathi side. While the language has attained legal as well as 'national' status its popular use and wider acceptance have remained a distant dream.

The language movement has caused some change only in 'official' and 'literary' terms, which has benefitted only a small minority. In education the language has found a place at the university level that too only in Goa but those offering the language at that level are left to their fate as no provision is made by the state machinery or by the education system to provide them opportunities. The language bodies and organisations have nothing ambitious or attention worthy to offer in their functioning and planning, except the role of distributor of goodies in terms of awards, positions and opportunities within a limited regional and caste

circle. As a result the 'historic' struggle for national status to a language has culminated in securing the prestige and positions to a select few within the section of a language community. In the world of competitive politics script has come in handy to those having access to education, administration and power-play in the regional scheme of things. Their predicament is clearly seen in their attempt to stress that the identity and culture called Konkani is found only in 'their' language, which is defined by 'their' script.

All the issues and events hereto discussed lead us to certain posers in relation to what the language has achieved through the long movement. While multiplicity of scripts has been shown as the strength of the language (Borkar in *Konkan Times* -???), there is repeated and consistent appeal in favour of a single script (Keni, Karmali, Rao, Mallaya, Swami Supriya from the *Parishad* and *Sammelan* platform). The political trends and administrative mechanisms have been used to support the single script to gain authenticity and status. But in the process the living system of language and its link with community has come under pressure. While by appropriating the language in official terms in the name of script, an elite caste among Hindus has provided a security cover for itself, the language as a whole has suffered a setback. Those using scripts other than Devanagari have realised that their language has no standing in official terms, which also deprives them of many opportunities of fuller participation in cultural life at different levels. The questions of distributive justice and enjoyment of fundamental rights also figure in the process. Cultural compartmentalisation in the name of script puts hurdles in the process of developing a sense of equality of

status and that of opportunities. Those who have their most intimate and inseparable aspects of cultural and social life defined through their language, find themselves outside the arena of recognition because of script. Their identity is defined in terms of symbolic expression with acquired system instead of their living and vibrant mode of self-representation through their tradition. While the attributes such as scientific, natural, appropriate and national strengthen a medium of script they also essentialise an aspect in the cultural domain to restrict the entry of others.

While the claim to Konkani started as a search for identity by a Hindu upper caste group its association with the old religious literature of the Roman Catholics made the whole issue appear secular. In the course of political transformation in the colonial regime in Goa during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the same caste tried to identify itself with the neighbouring Maharashtra through growing Marathi influence. But the metropolitan experience of the caste led its intellectuals to stress cultural differences using the language and region as the bases of identity. Nationalist movement, and promotion of Devanagari through it, worked towards gaining credence to the Aryan-Hindu character of the language, which expressed itself through the element of script. Though there was general consensus on Devanagari as the common and ideal script for Konkani its acceptance by all the sections was simply taken for granted, its popularisation through education and communication remained neglected. The votaries of Devanagari especially from Goa captured the movement and using their closeness with the Congress party and government at the centre managed to achieve their

goal of making Konkani in Devanagari script 'authentic' and official. In this process the large Catholic population from Goa and Karnataka, producing large amount of literature and using their language in their community cultural life was left out, as the scripts they used for Konkani were pushed to a corner in the eyes of law and the state. This transformed the debate on recognition to language into other larger issues of culture, identity, polity, citizenship and civic rights. Politics of recognition in this period has undergone change as there are castes, communities, regions claiming their share of recognition with respect to what the language has supposedly achieved.

## CHAPTER VI : ACHIEVEMENTS AND DILEMMAS OF THE MOVEMENT

The preceding chapters have provided us with the socio-historical background and the cultural landscape of the Konkani movement. They have highlighted the nuances of the regional dynamics that have in turn led to a changing politics of recognition. Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century language has been at the centre of public scrutiny in western India. This we have shown in chapter I. The decade of 1920s, in particular, makes an interesting study because of the public debate that took place on the status of Konkani as an independent language, and its enumeration separately from Marathi for the first time in the census of 1930. The following decade was marked by a growing mobilisation in the name of Konkani in North Kanara, in the form of the *Mandals* and the *Parishad*. The next decade - the decade of the Indian independence - witnessed the shifting of the centre of activity for Konkani to the metropolis of Bombay where the activity got transformed into movement with wider demands. In the post-independence decade the leadership of the movement worked towards giving the language a national image while at the same time developing the agenda of safeguarding a much smaller regional group. By the time of Goa liberation the elite leadership of the movement had found its safe ground within the larger movement. Immediately after liberation it ensured that the language promoted through education and communication would be defined by the specific caste section of Goa. The first decade after liberation was significant in terms of deciding the political future of the territory within the Indian federation. Democratic rights to the hitherto deprived masses were a threat

to elite interests and to ward off the possibility of the merger of Goa with the neighbouring state of Maharashtra the elite leadership of Konkani arranged the collaboration of Goan Catholics and non-Goan wage earners in Goa in the name of a distinct Konkani identity. Their monopolisation of the local Congress and their manoeuvring of the language organisations helped in maintaining their hold over the movement. Further their use of the media, to accommodate the masses, and their negotiating skills to sideline genuine differences, also came in handy. In addition their familiarity with the statutory arrangements, such as the VIII Schedule or Sahitya Akademi recognition, and their proximity to centres of power through individuals such as Kaka Kalelkar, gave them an advantage in terms of formulating demands on behalf of the language community. To achieve a constitutional recognition for the language, its secular character was projected, and to present a national image for the movement, regional groups were incorporated.

The ultimate aim of attaining equal status and national honour was realised within the period of less than a century. But in the process a number of issues with regard to language community and access to language resources, democratic rights in a multi-cultural setting, benefits to elites vis-a-vis the larger community, state recognition and community empowerment, competition for positional goods, concern for economic benefits, also the role of caste identities and question of traditional versus secular identities emerged as topographical features on the landscape of Konkani. The celebration of the success and achievement in 'official' terms, the 'consensus' on the conclusion in formal terms

of the language movement have produced a set of dilemmas that are still surfacing.

As recognised by scholars, Konkani has a number of dialects. Katre (1966) identified twenty of them and later studied six major ones. Jose Pereira (1992) spoke of seven dialects of Konkani. But neither has this variety and diversity been subjected to serious academic analysis by the initiative from the movement nor is there any consistent effort seen on the part of language leadership towards finalising the single standard for common use. Each of the regional variants in use have experienced exchanges with larger languages in the regions. With varying degrees of literary activities, in some of these variants, the popular common use of a particular style has not come about. This is so mainly because of the prevalence of a multi-literal situation. There have been repeated appeals and declarations, since the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, favouring Devanagari as the appropriate and ideal script for Konkani<sup>1</sup> but different regional groups have continued using their regional scripts, while supporting Nagari publicly throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Different communities and castes of Konkani speakers have lived under different political settings for the past few centuries, as a result of which their perspectives on language use and utility have been shaped differently. Issues of cultural and social identity, as well as concern for economic and political advantages, have guided the strategies and actions of these different groups. These considerations have transformed their activities into contests, which are grounded in the social formations of caste and community.

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<sup>1</sup> . In 1923 Luis Mascarenhas of *Konkani Dirvem* spoke to a Mangalorean Catholic audience and stressed on the adoption of Devanagari script for Konkani. In 1940 Adv. M.M. Shanbhag, founder of the *Parishad* made a similar appeal in his public address in Mangalore. Shennai Goembab insisted on Devanagari.

crystallising further on a territorial basis. In this way the issue of script is linked with identity and power.

While the concept of Konkani identity is popularised through the use of organisational devices its content remains ambiguous and fuzzy. Goa is projected as the homeland of Konkani but being Konkani is not necessarily the same as being Goan. There are questions raised about this relationship. Some see the emphasis on Goanness or '*Goenkarponn*' as marginalisation or even subversion of the larger Konkani identity (Interview - Pratap Naik). Some others consider Goa as too small a territory for the potential of Konkani to flourish and want to expand the borders of Goa to include the neighbouring regions occupied by Konkani speakers, to make it a Konkani state (Interview – Gurunath Kelekar). For this they link the idea with the formation of the *Parishad* (e. g. Ravindra Kelekar), but others do not support this contention (Uday Bhembre) and fear the dissolution of Goan community in case of such territorial formation. Konkani language movement has been silent on these issues and has remained more as a literary activity controlled by a small elite section from Goa i. e., the Saraswat Brahmins. Their role as leaders of the Konkani language movement vis-à-vis their caste fraternity in Karnataka and Kerala on the one hand and in relation to the considerable Konkani population of Catholics on the other is one of the significant insights of this study. The study shows how the Konkani language movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is largely guided by the considerations and inner dynamics of this elite. Most of the moves, strategies, decisions and actions in the movement have followed the specific socio-cultural agenda of this elite forming part of their search for identity. The regional concerns and considerations

are shaped by the specific political administrative realities obtaining at a particular time. Hence the goal of creating a single integrated image of Konkani has remained a dream.

On the basis of the survey of the Konkani language movement over the 20<sup>th</sup> century it is suggested that the role of elites has been crucial during all the phases and in every region. These elite groups had differing agendas and interests. The GSBs of Goa had their dilemmas in the face of the strong Marathi influence. In their confrontation with the forces of state-supported church, they had to establish their cultural ties with Marathi during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century which they sustained and strengthened through temples. Using the Portuguese colonial policy of streamlining the institutional set up they positioned themselves as the custodians of the major temples in Goa, which they claimed as their family deities (Keni, 1998)<sup>2</sup>. Using these Marathi links they spread education and produced literature that reflected Goan social reality of their caste. The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is known for *Demand Mahaatmya*<sup>3</sup> (A description of legal disputes for property peculiar to Goan Saraswat landed gentry of the time) and *Maanifest Puraann*<sup>4</sup> (a poetic rendering of the gimmicks reflective of the time), both casting the colonial phenomena into traditional literary creations. Also the

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<sup>2</sup> . Chandrakant Keni, one of the strategists of the Konkani movement, has maintained that Saraswats are the natural leaders of Goans and has acquired an image of an intellectual within the saraswat community. His involvement in the *Math* affairs and his views on the importance of the Saraswats are well known. During the popular movement in Goa demanding the right of entry for the masses to temple managements, he wrote on the private character and family rights in the temple managements and opposed the idea of such change.

<sup>3</sup> . *Demand* is the legal suit - a practice that was common among the Goan Saraswats in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mainly in respect of land and property. Many Saraswats were in Portuguese administration and were known for their interest in such suits, in which they gained importance.

<sup>4</sup> . *Manifest* was the term used for the allotment of land for cultivation by locals for which colonial government provided financial incentive. This was the arrangement to overcome the hardships of famine and food scarcity discussed by the *Congress Provincial* in its sessions in 1920s ( See Naik, 1938: pp.67-94). This provision was misused by the Saraswats.

projection of 'Bhaveen' and 'Bhatkar' in Marathi prose writings of the time reflect the self-image of the Goan Saraswats. But during the same period the larger Indian political situation, to which Goans settled in Maharashtra in general and those in the metropolis of Bombay in particular were witness, influenced their sense of the self. This process was responsible for the establishment of organisations such as The Goa Hindu Association<sup>5</sup>. By the end of the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Goan Saraswat emigrants in Bombay had growing anxieties about their status and position. The *Saraswat Brahmann Samaj* of Bombay organised the lectures of Shennai Goembab, in which a distinct Konkani identity was stressed (Goembab, 1928). As the caste was seeking parity of status with the other Brahmin sects of Maharashtra it had to invent itself through the language to establish autonomy. Sharing Devanagari script as the legacy of Sanskrit, the mother language of both Marathi and Konkani, was a part of this strategy.

In Karnataka, the issue was more complex with the Konkani elite divided into two political units having two strong regional languages. North Kanara Saraswats could easily identify with Marathi whereas the South Kanara group was at home with Kannada. The two regional groups served the two languages as writers, grammarians, lexicographers and used the two scripts – Devanagari and Kannada respectively - in their limited use of Konkani. As settlers and business community in the two regions they had to learn and use the two languages but in the phase of awakening of the caste consciousness in the

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<sup>5</sup> .Though the Association is for all Goans the original idea was to form it as a Saraswat body. Though membership is open to any Goan, it has always been under the control of Goan Saraswats.

early 20<sup>th</sup> century these groups sought to project Devanagari as their tradition. Their claim to northern origin (*Pancha Gaudas*) supported this claim. In real practice, however, they used the pragmatic approach of education in Marathi for women (as they would be married away to caste emigrants in Bombay and other places in the Marathi speaking region) and Kannada for men (who could continue family business, profession in the southern state), till the state language came to be implemented with vigour and intensity in Karnataka after 1970s. With land reforms North Kanara witnessed large scale migration of Saraswats to Bombay resulting in assimilation with Marathi speaking population and adopting Marathi as their language of culture and communication. South Kanara Saraswats supported Devanagari as a cultural strategy but continued with their use of Kannada script and language. Their service to Kannada language has been much more than that to Konkani. But their siding with Devanagari had two sides – one, in relation to regional Brahmin groups, they could claim an independent language with its own script, thereby removing a psychological subservience to the Kannada language group through their script, and the other, they could identify with the linguistic and literary resources in Devanagari produced and possessed by their counterparts in Maharashtra and Goa, thereby seeking strength to counter the Mangalorean Catholic claims to Konkani by virtue of their organised and sizeable work for the language.

In case of Mangalore Catholics Konkani is the main symbol of identity to strengthen their community. They can justify their claims through their use of Konkani in literary, cultural and social life. But they have used only Kannada script for Konkani throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With growing economic

compulsions and out of urge for social mobility the demand for English is on the rise. The church has used Konkani only as a means of religious activity and communication with people. With urge for upward mobility among people demand for English in education and religious services is on the rise. Activities of Konkani are conducted through some organisations in which contests for positions are seen between the GSBs and Catholics. As both these sections use Kannada script for Konkani, their contest is close. But the GSBs have a strategic advantage of being associated with their caste fraternity outside the state, which provides them psychological access to Devanagari. This imaginary relationship to Devanagari serves in projecting a strong side in the contest against Catholics. Another area of contest is the constitutional safeguards as a minority. While Catholics are a religious minority the GSB family of the Pais have succeeded in getting minority concessions in the name of language but on the basis of caste, guided by the Kerala GSBs. By establishing institutions in the name of linguistic minority this business family has succeeded in safeguarding its economic interests and promoting its commercial prospects. Its service to Konkani is cosmetic and ornamental, with no efforts to give it a place in education, communication and community life. The Manipal Pais have received benefits from Konkani in securing their economic interests through constitutional safeguards. To justify the status of linguistic minority institution gained through legal battle it supports the work of Konkani and operates as a power broker for the GSBs in their contest against Catholics in South Kanara with its centre in Mangalore.

In Kerala, the Catholic factor is absent and the Saraswats i.e. GSBs have used Konkani to promote their caste interests in the strongly caste-oriented socio-

political milieu. They have exploited the similarity in nomenclature of their caste and language to seek constitutional and state protection for the caste in the name of the language. To claim equality for 'their' language with other stronger languages in the region, they have supported Devanagari. Linguistic Minority status is claimed by the upper caste to protect their temples from the state intervention. Their language loyalty is thus guided by the sense of power and prestige, which is purely caste-based as shown in Chapter II. Others among Konkani speakers in Kerala have, under pressure of economic forces, and also largely due to GSB attitude, stayed away from Konkani.

This variety of region-specific considerations of different social formations has given rise to competition between different interests of these groupings. Elites in each of these regions have used the combination of selective collaboration and undeclared contestation with other groups in and outside each of these regions to further their limited interests. For Konkani speakers in the two southern states of Karnataka and Kerala, learning the regional languages is compulsory. Their economic, political functions and socio-cultural transactions at the state level can be best served only through the regional scripts. They have served Konkani through these scripts all through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But when it comes to inter-caste relations, Brahmins prefer to distinguish themselves by their claims to Devanagari which is often in nominal use within the caste. Moreover, a large majority of them being in trade and business, their interests and prospects are linked to the regional languages and scripts. But their caste considerations strengthened by local socio-political environment provide them a psychological advantage of linking with the wider Saraswat world and state-sponsored national

language. Catholics on the other hand have specific problems in their regional concerns. Mangalore Catholics use Kannada and Goa Catholics use Roman script. Their religious material, creative literature and mass communication promote these two scripts. The inter-elite contestations within the Konkani speaking groups operate through scripts. Among all these elites, the role of Goan GSBs is very significant.

This role of GSBs of Goa is to be viewed in the scheme of power contestations with reference to Konkani. In their search for a political identity they worked to empower themselves through the language, which was to be the basis of state formation in independent India. In the metropolitan settings, Konkani speakers from different regions had their community linkages preserved through print media using the regional scripts. As members of their native states they had their economic and cultural interests already defined by the cultural and linguistic terrain of the respective states. Goan GSBs in contrast had the opportunity to make a choice in this respect, as Goa under the Portuguese was yet to find its place in the larger Indian state. Goan Catholics had a tradition of migration which made them 'citizens of the world'. They remained Goans even when they accepted different nationalities as emigrants (Satoskar, 1954). Within Goa the attempt of the Portuguese government was to stress the spiritual ties of Goa with Portugal (Montalto, 1952), which was countered by Hindu Goans - particularly GSBs - through the Marathi press in Maharashtra, mainly daily *Kesari* of Pune. Those in Goa preferred to be called Marathi and associated themselves with the literary as well as cultural associations and institutions from Maharashtra. *Saraswat Brahman Samaj* of Margao (currently *Gomant Vidya*

*Niketan*) and such other institutions of the GSBs in Goa had guest speakers and invitees on regular basis from Pune and other centres of education and culture in Maharashtra since the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Naik, 1938). Their sense of nationalism was nurtured through Marathi as against the Portuguese that considered Goans as Portuguese subjects. But in the metropolitan milieu, the cultural and political concerns were covered in the language identity sought to be acquired through Konkani. While doing this, the Goan GSB intelligentsia, guided by the ideas of Shennai Goembab, began to disempower others, by restricting 'authentic' Konkani to Devanagari. Those using other scripts were involved in the language programmes but they were advised through their own leaders (e.g. Prof. Armando Menezes in the *Parishad*, 1942) that Devanagari was the original and national script, hence all should adopt it for Konkani. Prof. Menezes, in his Presidential Address in 1942, was clear that Konkani was 'one of ... (his) many interests' and 'not .. (his) mother-tongue', 'at least,...not (his) only mother-tongue' (Menezes,1942). He could advise others on the script choice as he had little to gain or lose in that process.

The mass medium of All India Radio was used<sup>6</sup> to promote spoken language of people, starting with Bombay station in early 1950s. At other places such as Dharwar the programmes were started in 1960s and were restricted to weekly broadcasts of half an hour duration, consisting mostly of music. This

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<sup>6</sup> . Introduction of Konkani in this medium was, in itself, the work of a Goan GSB bureaucrat. The programs were started by appointing Goan GSBs to man the Konkani section in Bombay; other places too had GSBs.

helped in creating a national setting for the language through the script that was identified with national image because of its association with Hindi. While Konkani had been used over a decade earlier in broadcasts from Vatican (Interview - Paul Moras) its purpose was religious. This time it had a different context and the promoters of the language managed to project it as a secular and a national cause. But in this process, the empowerment of the language amounted to disempowerment of the vast sections of its users. Because by introducing language to this medium its use and spread was enhanced. Konkani speakers could use the medium to reach out to their community which was scattered all over the country and also outside the country. Through this medium speakers of Konkani had an opportunity to establish links among their different regional groups and thereby develop a sense of unity and community. This also helped in exchange and sharing within the language community as well as with other languages. But while getting entry to broadcasting, which is essentially the medium of the spoken word, Konkani was sought to be written in Devanagari for preparing the written scripts of the matter to be broadcast. This condition of script restricted the access to the language and the medium. A large section of Konkani speakers used scripts other than Devanagari – Kannada in Karnataka and Roman in Goa - for Konkani. They had to rely on transliteration for getting an opportunity to use the medium. The producers and other staff members in Konkani section being largely Goan GSBs, they used Devanagari alone. Others had access to the medium through this script. This fixation of script was justified on the basis of its Indo-Aryan origin, national character and scientific nature.

In the early years of the post-independence language situation the sense of empowerment of Konkani was raised by a resolution in the *Parishad* in 1952 that the Konkani speakers reserved their right to demand their own state at a future date. The Union government was approached on the issue by a delegation from Karwar on behalf of Konkani speakers in North Kanara (*Jaag* May 1997). Later ideas such as ‘*saagari Prant*’ of Kaka Kalelkar (Sukhthankar, 1974) or ‘Konkan state’ by George Moraes (Bharat Mitra 1957) kept this feeling of Konkani land alive. But once Goa was liberated that Konkani became restricted to Goa. This was aptly revealed in the change of the theme song of the Konkani movement. from ‘*Konkann Aamcho Des, Aavai Konkanni Bhaas*’ (Konkan is our land, Our mother is Konkani language) of Bayaabhau before 1960 to ‘*Goem Amchem Mullpeeth, Konkanni Aamchi Bhaas*’ (Goa is our ancestral land and Konkani is our language) by Bakibab Borkar later. In liberated Goa Konkani in education was to be in Devanagari alone and that was implemented by the KBM through its text-books. Here again, the leadership of the language body was kept with a Catholic (Pedro Correia Afonso) in that phase to ensure better co-operation from the schools under missionary and other Catholic managements. The script restriction made a major difference to Catholics for whom the language had emotional value as it gave them a sense of cultural security and identity. In early 1960s Vatican II had made suggestions about education and religious life in the local language which facilitated open thinking on the part of the Roman Catholic church. This helped to some extent in gaining support of missionary schools for the move of Konkani education. The earlier developments such as the Report of the Justice Niyogi Committee (1956), which was appointed to enquire into the activities of Christian

missionaries, had led to a debate on the Indianisation of the church (Ketkar, 1969: 218). Liberation of Goa had also created a feeling of uncertainty and insecurity in a section of Goan Catholics (Melo Furtado, 2000: 481). There were many among them who were ready to take to Hindi seriously in their efforts to adopt the national language policy, which also helped in getting positive support to Konkani in Devanagari (Interview: Pundalik Naik). All these were used in introducing Konkani in education.

With introduction of Konkani in education as a medium of instruction at elementary stage and also as a regional language, in later stages of school education, it was expected that Konkani speaking masses would willingly support the language. But till 1970 Konkani was offered by Catholic students as a third language, since they had no choice. Being traditionally oriented to keep away from Marathi, a small section of Catholic students offered Portuguese and French, but for the first generation learners among them, Konkani was the only choice, which too was conditioned by the script. The language leadership conceded publicly to continuation of the Roman script for some time but leaders did not allow its use in education. As a result, these children's own language became a nightmare for them, generally marginalised in the English medium schools, mainly in the missionary schools, along with Marathi and Hindi<sup>7</sup>. There was no scientific study of the language in pedagogy, because the whole approach was to

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<sup>7</sup> . In many of these schools Hindu teachers were appointed to teach these languages and they could not enjoy teaching these languages mainly because of the attitude of their superiors towards these languages. This is seen even today. This observation is based on the feedback on the issue from many teachers. Mr. N. Shivdas, a Konkani writer and activist, Vice President of the GKA for two terms (1996-2002), himself a teacher of Konkani in a Diocesan Society school has been critical of this apathy and indifference to Konkani in these schools.

'make it easy' mainly for the *crístao* children<sup>8</sup>. The higher stages of education were covered through Konkani as a language and also its literature after the recognition of the language by the Sahitya Akademi in 1976 but the use of this language in building knowledge in other disciplines of life with an academic perspective is still missing. The masses among Catholics, who used Konkani to express themselves in all areas of community life, are left out because of the script condition. Language leadership, while 'prescribing' Devanagari script for Konkani, ought to have provided time for the switch over, a kind of semi-open gate for a generation or two to facilitate the transition so that a sense of belonging would develop through the officially recognised script.

Goan GSBs prescribed the solution of single script for Konkani through their efforts and their counterparts in other regions subscribed to the 'policy', without making any arrangement for the actual shift. Some efforts in Mangalore came from *Raknno* when Fr. Mark Valdar was its editor in 1970s. Institute of Konkani started *Amar Konkani* in two scripts - Kannada and Devanagari - in 1981, which has now completed twenty-two years. GSBs in Mangalore have their own educational institutions but Konkani finds no place in them. They still carry on with Kannada script and find Devanagari of little practical value. In Kerala though Konkani in Devanagari script is introduced in schools, many people who write in Konkani use Malayalam script. The state promotes Malayalam language and for the masses it is a vehicle of their socio-economic life activities. As for the two schools where Konkani is introduced as a subject, the arrangement is in

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<sup>8</sup> . This fact was admitted by Shri. Suresh Borkar, a senior teacher, a leading member of the school text - book committee in Goa and writer of Konkani Grammar, in a workshop on Konkani orthography organised by GKA at Farmagudi - Ponda on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1999.

relation to the linguistic minority status acquired by the GSBs running the institutions. There are no plans to extend the facility to any other institution. The process of disempowerment of other sections among Konkani speakers through the script has led to shifts in peoples' language choices. General trend to adopt English for mobility and development has been strengthened by this disempowerment process.

This leads us to another point related to script. Devanagari is essentially an exercise in National imagination. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the stress was on Hindi and Devanagari as national language and script respectively. Goan leadership has repeatedly stressed on the need to learn Devanagari to make learning of Hindi easy, or conversely, they plead that as children learn Hindi as a compulsory subject in school, Devanagari is known to them and that makes learning Konkani easy. The thinking behind this argument is that Devanagari provides an access to other Indian languages. This national imagination has served the elite interests and is true for them. For the masses state and regional languages come as the top priority and a natural choice, for which the scripts they use are essential. Their political identity is defined by the language and script in use within the borders of their state of domicile. Forcing them to give up their scripts in favour of Devanagari amounts to deprivation in a pluralist set up. It is like asking them to give up their long lived regional identity for an 'invented' national identity.

This invention is to be seen in the light of the past century in which GSBs had a psychological battle with the Chitpavans. The concerted emphasis on Nagari is a part of this battle. For GSBs, Chitpavans were 'the other' and this

caste confrontation in the region had to be necessarily based on the resource of script which claimed vedic legacy. In their battle with the Chitpavans the GSBs produced a language and literature to claim as their own but in this claim they used the strength and resources of other castes and communities. The oral folk tradition in the language or the literary and cultural treasure of the larger language community has been appropriated but the transaction is one sided because building of wherewithals to facilitate and support transition of these people to the 'modern' language is not done by the GSB leadership. Efforts in that direction on the part of others (non-GSBs) have not been reciprocated adequately. While creating organisations and associational arrangements the approach is to ensure that their control is with the community members. This has led to multiplicity of organisations with little or no co-ordination (Prabhu, 1989). Feeling of being left out and ignored is aired by many, who work within the organisational structure of Konkani movement<sup>9</sup>. Hence, while the language called Konkani has benefitted in formal and legal terms the community that sustained the speech has yet to receive a share in those benefits.

The roots of this paradox lie in the elite production of a socio-historical identity through mobilisation and invention over the past century. The mention of *Maths* and temples as the centres of language (Mallaya – Interview) is only symbolic because no temples or *Maths* have promoted Konkani. But the GSB leadership has used the good office of their Swamis (Math Heads) to create an image of language activities as their community affairs. Many among GSBs

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<sup>9</sup> . Paul Moras, the ex-President of KBMK feels that the Goan GSB leadership does not recognise the Mangalore leadership. Dr. William Madtha of Mangalore and Shri. Pundalik Naik of Goa, both past Presidents of the Konkani Parishad have questioned this approach. Edwin J.F. D'Souza, who presided over the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Parishad at Karwar in 1989 has the same view.

too admit that their temple authorities and Math managers have the potential to contribute to language development in a big way, but the two institutions have become more of estate managers and corporate ventures of the community rather than cultural centres<sup>10</sup>. Over the 20<sup>th</sup> century the mobilisation of the GSB community was effected through regional associations such as Kanara Saraswat Association (Est. 1911) or wider organisations such as the All India Saraswat Cultural Organisation – AISCO (est. 1972). Invention of the sense of community and a rich past was transformed into regional pride linked to Goa and an imagined national role through Konkani, which was to counter the Marathi hegemony of the Chitpavans in the region. Exposure to metropolitan cultural-political dynamics combined with strong influence of the Marathi language and culture led to the shaping of this socio-historical identity, which was articulated and circulated widely with access to print media. Political transformations in the region during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Portuguese Republic, The Language Policy of the Congress, Promotion of Hindi as a National Language. principle of regional autonomy based on language formalised later as linguistic states) provided scope for growth of this community feeling and allowed it to take the language as the symbol of their identity.

In the Goan context, this socio-historical identity was important for the generation that had no sense of history because of its neglect in the local cultural life. The Portuguese colonial intervention had its contrasting effects on the two sections of the Goan community. With the awakening through education and

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<sup>10</sup> . A few individuals among GSBs in the course of their interviews openly criticised the approach of their maths and temples to enhance their properties and assets and their little contribution to education and development of the community. But everyone felt that it is the narrow perspective of the authorities that comes in the way. Temples have become their grounds for power tussles as they possess resources.

access to liberal democratic institutions the organised caste group of the GSBs managed to utilise the opportunity to relate to the larger Indian world and at the same time to create their own cultural world. The power struggle between Catholic and Hindu elites in Goa during the Portuguese Republic continued and transformed into the script contest in the new dispensation of linguistic states under the Indian Union. The growing middle class among the GSBs looked for status whereas the church controlled Catholics had cultural anxieties and political uncertainties looming large on the eve of liberation. All these contributed to the making of this socio-historical identity. Metropolis not only brought the scattered Konkani speakers together but also enabled the organisers among them to understand the worries of those living under other linguistic regions. This added awareness of the grounds available for formulation of strategies helped in using the Konkani strength outside Goa to devise a scheme for consolidation under Goan control. The establishment of KBMK in Mangalore, making Konkani Parishad a Goa-based statutory body and demand of statehood for Goa on the basis of language shaped and styled in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were a part of this exercise in appropriating power. This evolution of Konkani movement also presented its own dilemmas for the Konkani language community as a whole.

While the GSBs of Goa had their plan of action for Goa the caste groups in other states had to work out their own strategies to capture symbolic power. In Kerala, the trading community of the GSBs had its problems in the caste-ridden environment and the socialist government. To protect their temporal interests they used their temples as symbols of cultural autonomy and managed to get the constitutional protection as a linguistic minority. Their support to

Devanagari too came out of their need to seek autonomy to their caste (Konkanis) which they used to signify language. This enabled them to:

- a) answer the local detractors of Konkani (about its independent language status with its own script), thereby claiming social prestige and political power.
- b) address the issues of economic security (checking the state interference, reducing political threats to their interests, retaining institutional control) through minority status and related benefits, and
- c) avoid claims of the larger sections of Konkani speakers on their cultural space (by keeping the forces challenging their hegemony e.g. Devadasis – who claimed the legal status of Non-Brahmin Saraswats, or Kudumbis who freed themselves from the traditional hold of GSBs and mobilised themselves for concessions from the state and even Vaishyas who had shared temple rights with them in the past) or even on the statutory positions symbolising share in state power.

Ironically, the state government of Kerala has not recognised Konkani language as such, though ‘it can be considered as a minority language in the state, as it is in the VIII schedule of the Constitution’. Neither any Konkani institution receives grant from government nor is there any scheme for such grants<sup>11</sup>.

In Karnataka considerations have been more economic as can be seen from the activities in Mangalore region. The role of the Pai family of Manipal, pioneers of commercial banking in South India, has been highlighted in

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<sup>11</sup> . This information is gratefully received from Shri. P. G. Kamath of Trichur, President of Kerala Konkani Academy, a Konkani institution and Member, Advisory Board for Konkani of Sahitya Akademi (1998-2002) vide his letter dtd. 2. 7. 1998.

Chapter IV . Their interest in language issues is reflected in their support to the *Konkani Parishad* and KBMK as well as to many other activities through Dr. T. M.A.Pai Foundation. A number of organisations, associations and individuals are benefitted by financial support to their publishing and other activities for Konkani. All India Konkani Drama Festival, Annual Literary Awards, Felicitation of Konkani Personalities are the major activities of the Foundation. But the very basis of the Foundation is the Kerala case of recognition to the Gauda Saraswat Brahmin caste as a Linguistic Minority. This cultural platform has helped the Pais to establish their linguistic concerns and their major commercial or economic interests are covered under this patronage. While these activities of recognising literary, cultural and social wealth of Konkani are symbolic, the real need of Konkani language promotion is long term planning and investment in education. But sadly, Konkani is conspicuous by its absence in education-related activities under the management of the Pais. There are institutions of higher learning in specialised professional faculties such as Medicine, Engineering, Information Technology, Business Management, Law, Education and colleges of General Education at the Under-Graduate level as well as schools and Junior College. but teaching of Konkani is not even considered for future. as there is 'no currency' and 'no particular advantage, but every disadvantage' seen in it<sup>12</sup>. The Management sees no possibility of introducing Konkani as it is possible to carry on without Konkani. As regards privileges as a linguistic minority. K. K. Pai feels that by themselves they are not important but act only as 'enabling things'. The

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<sup>12</sup> . According to K. K. Pai, President of the Parishad (1974-1976) and the spokesman of the Foundation, practical use of Konkani is 'almost nil' and Konkani will survive as a spoken language. He considers working for the preservation of Konkani as a 'denominational patriotic duty' of Konkani speakers and recommends creating literature to popularise it.

House of Pais have a daily newspaper in Kannada language with good circulation while the cause of Konkani is served only by the monthly '*Panchakadayi*' which is circulated mainly among GSBs published by *Konkani Bhashoddhar Trust*. As organs of a linguistic minority management the Manipal educational institutions provide the best of educational facilities at a premium. Neither language nor community come into the picture.

The Foundation has instituted prizes for literary works for which writings in any of the scripts used for Konkani are considered. While the central body such as Sahitya Akademi or the state funded Goa Konkani Akademi of Goa consider the works only in Devanagari the Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy awards are mainly for the writings in Kannada script. But by considering all the scripts for the award, the Pais have created a position of wider acceptability in the Konkani speaking community. This arrangement has also worked as a safety valve to safeguard their interests as GSBs whose support to Devanagari mainly in Karnataka is not truly convincing to the large Catholic section in the Konkani movement. The Pais have maintained balance between their 'academic' cultural view on Devanagari script and the practical economic interests involved in Kannada script. The Pais of Manipal and their institutions signify the change in character from their earlier strategy to seek constitutional protection to the later policy of rewarding the 'disenfranchised' sections. By this their attempt to promote regional and national image as Konkani institution gains credence.

What is seen as a language movement in Karnataka is organisationally managed by *Konkani Bhasha Mandal Karnataka* as a non-governmental body and the *Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy* of the state government. In both of them

the two communities have contested for positions and control, as discussed in Chapter III. Both sides are gripped by a sense of loss and want to make it up through different means. Catholics are engaged in a search for recognition in the name of Konkani which they satiate by conferring the titles such as '*Konkani Kogul*' (Nightingale of Konkani) – Wilfy Rebimbus, '*Konkani Sahitya Shiromani*' (Epitome of Konkani Literature) – V. J. P. saldanha, '*Konkani kala Samrat*' (The Emperor of Konkani Art) – Eric Ozario etc. Literary world of Konkani in this region is monopolised by Catholic writers but financial support for Konkani comes largely from the GSB and other Hindu Business Houses and commercial enterprises. Paul Moras, ex-President of KBMK and Convenor, *Konkani Jatha* accepts that Catholics have manpower but have to work under the GSBs who provide funds. GSBs look at Konkani from caste perspective and consider their own dialect as pure and standard, also strive to project Konkani from their perspective. '*Vishwa Konkani Sammelan*' in 1995 was an example of this GSB view. It had caste-wise exhibition stalls, which became a target of criticism in Goan Konkani circles. Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Akademi too had these caste – specific programmes in different regions of Karnataka viz. '*Aami Konkani- Aami Navayat*' in Bhatkal, '*Aami Konkani. Aami Kharvi*' in Kundapura. '*Aami Konkani Aami Siddi*' in Yellapur during the tenure of Basti Vaman Shenoy as its President. In this sense recognising and celebrating castes has been a feature of Konkani movement, headed by the GSBs.

In the two southern states there is a limited practical value of Konkani, the fact recognised by the Konkani speakers there. But within the constitutional framework, the elites have managed to derive benefits for themselves as a caste

group on the basis of language, at the same time supporting Devanagari script as their cultural and spiritual treasure, while using the local scripts and languages in all their other public activities. Devanagari has helped them claim authentic national and Hindu character which they value in order to win the caste contest with other local Brahmins.

In Goa too, the contest has been for power through language and script, but the caste element is underplayed for practical reasons. Portuguese rule had made Hindus in Goa relatively more liberal and open to changes. As a strategy, the GSBs in Goa had to project Konkani as people's language and also a secular means of communication as against Marathi that was viewed by Goan Catholics as Hindu religious language. To build strength for Konkani in Devanagari script youth from Marathi-educated Hindu masses were roped in, which also helped in neutralising the anti-Saraswat mobilisation under the pro-Marathi *Bahujan Samaj*. The movement for recognition of Konkani was made a mass movement using the fresh creativity of the Hindu masses, traditional church-sponsored Catholic forces and strategy-wielding intellectual elements among the GSBs in the face of traditional Marathi sentiments among Goan Hindus as a whole.

In the liberal democratic political structure Goan strategy of making Konkani a secular medium worked despite misrepresentation of the literary reality till the recognition of the Sahitya Akademi in 1975. In Kalelkar's words: 'How much literature there is in a language is another matter. The main question is whether the community that speaks the language is cultured or not, whether its

life is rich or poor.’ (Sardesai, 1964: 6)<sup>13</sup>. The poor man’s Konkani, written in abundance in Roman script was ignored but the ‘cultured’ Konkani in Devanagari with a few books made a literary world of the language. This is where the strategy of the Goan GSBs succeeded. Also, in contrast to Karnataka, the two communities had two different scripts promoted traditionally. Their literary worlds existed in seclusion from each other. The Roman script literature which was the treasurehouse of Konkani (*Jot*, 1955: p. 2) till 1960s suffered after liberation mainly because of non-recognition and lack of encouragement from the language leaders (Interview – Tomazinho Cardoso). The replacement of Roman with Devanagari was ‘imminent’ according to the disciples of Shennai Goembab, but ‘it (Roman script) had to be retained for some time not to hurt the minds of thousands of people writing in the Roman script’. However, ‘it would not be right to preserve it’ (Editorial – *Jot*, Vol.1 No. 1). While this was the view during the liberation struggle inside Goan prisons<sup>14</sup> and till the Opinion Poll, a systematic sidelining strategy was followed thereafter.

They used different strategies at different times with state power. Sahitya Akademi recognition did not figure in the *Parishad* till 1967 whereas inclusion in the VIII schedule was demanded in 1962 *Parishad*. It was realised that staking a claim for literary status was necessary for further political gains and accordingly the Sahitya Akademi recognition was pushed through. For this an

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<sup>13</sup> . The first anthology of modern Konkani poems (with English Translation) published in 1964 as Book 1 contained two poems by a single Catholic poet, that too from Mangalore. All others were GSBs from Goa. Other regions were not represented. This was strange as pre-liberation Konkani writing was largely in the Roman script and by Goan Catholics settled in India and abroad.

<sup>14</sup> . *Konkani Abhyas Mandal* was formed in June 1955 in the prison of Reis magos to study Konkani in all its aspects and to attempt increasing literature in it. The manuscript magazine ‘*Jot*’ was seen as a sacred task. The editorial policy was to encourage writing in Devanagari but entertain Roman script writings if and when received.

assortment of books on different subjects was published within five years through the first Publishing House started in 1970. Preparation of school syllabus in Konkani, preparation of text-books, starting of Konkani drama festival in 1976-77 at Kala Academy Goa on the lines of *Tiatr* festival and Marathi Drama festival involved the leadership of KBM and others, mostly GSBs and sought participation of Catholics and Hindu masses.

The decade of 1980s witnessed broadbasing of the organisations with KBM leadership shifting to non-GSBs after the formation of the GKA, different local cultural associations taking up Konkani work, and the historic KPA finalising the agenda for Konkani in Goa. During this period, however, certain moves of the GSB leadership had a setback. One of them was to have a Chair for Konkani in Goa University under someone who would be working as per the strategies of the established leadership. But with the selection of a person not acceptable to the GSBs as Reader in Konkani things changed. Other organisations of non-GSB Konkani activists supported the new Department of Konkani in the University and introduced a full-fledged course in Post-Graduate studies in Konkani. Almost every appointment in the teaching faculty in the Department raised eye-brows. With no 'external' challenges before the movement the internal dynamics were exposed over the years.

Though the movement has played its role, its objectives are yet to be fulfilled. Neither the apex national body (*Akhil Bharatiya Konkani Parishad*) of the language has any permanent office and administrative structure nor any of the local bodies such as *Konkani Bhasha Mandals* have any records of their decades of functioning. None of the objectives specified in the 1939 *Parishad* have been

achieved. But the leadership is convinced that Konkani movement has achieved everything it aimed at. The entire movement has shown the GSB skills of articulation, negotiation, strategizing come of age. Among all the elements of the movement Goan GSBs have proved superior than others in their strategizing abilities. This is illustrated in Chapter V. They pined for a land they could rule, because they 'never had an opportunity to rule'. They wanted to be equal to others in India. But these others were the Marathi intellectuals, and Chitpavans in particular. The entire language movement moved in the face of Marathi and its role in Goa. Shennai Goembab spoke of Konkani invariably in comparison with Marathi, which continued as a tradition in Goa. Every move in the movement has been in reaction to or in response to something related to Marathi. As a result official matters and constitutional honours have been the main concern. After all the demands formulated in the course of the language movement have been met nothing much in respect of the language community has changed on the ground, except that the users of two main scripts viz. Kannada and Roman have found themselves out of the circle of beneficiaries from the linguistic and literary activities. The movement has produced a curious paradox of language and script. While the language has been empowered its share is not enjoyed by all the users of its scripts. Different groups using different scripts have lived this paradox. In coming to terms with it, they engage in competition for positional goods on the basis of caste and community within their regional settings.

Literature in Konkani has remained a regional and sectional or community production because of different scripts. Transliterations have been suggested as a way out but the veterans have expressed inadequacy of that measure (Prabhu:

1989)<sup>15</sup>, indicating thereby that those who do not adopt the official script lose their right to benefits from the language itself. This has happened in case of senior Konkani writers in Kannada script such as V. J. P. Saldanha who never received the Sahitya Akademi award. Many others in Karnataka remain unrecognised on the same ground. Even within the same script Konkani writings in Kannada are categorised on community lines. The movement has brought people together in a show of strength or in a moment of celebration and exhibition. There too ruptures are clearly evident (Rao: 1989).

Konkani has everything that other languages in India enjoy in official terms. Leaders of the Konkani language movement claim credit for their achievements. But their entire effort has been directed to making the state take up the responsibility of developing the language. Agencies and organisations have been created for this purpose. In the process popular creative movements for the language in their regional settings have ebbed over the years. The events such as *Konkani Parishad* and *Sahitya Sammelan* have been made into All India events in 1990s but the attendance has shrunk over the decade. The emergence of state on the scene of Konkani in the last two decades has affected the dynamism for Konkani adversely and the issues such as caste hegemony and regional elite monopoly, imposition of script and appropriation of spoils have surfaced openly on these 'national platforms' of the language. Appropriation of the movement by the state has made the movement docile, raising question on the very objectives of the movement (Souvenir, *Parishad* 1999).

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<sup>15</sup> . Ravindra Kelekar in response to his assessment of the attainment of the script objective of the Parishad admitted that the experiment of transliteration has not succeeded.

The foregoing shows, that the Konkani story remains an incomplete story covering milestones from opposition, to identity, to language, to script and now perhaps to the future. It is a captivating story.

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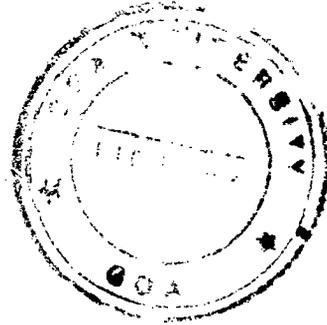
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**APPENDIX - I**  
**LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED**

<b>Abhimanyu, S. S.</b> Kerala, Konkani leader	<b>25/09/1999</b>
<b>Balakrishnan, A. R.</b> Kerala, Writer, Translator, Researcher	<b>02/02/2000</b>
<b>Bhaskar, R. S.</b> Kerala, Poet, Activist, Organiser (Member, Advisory Board-Sahitya Akademi: 1993-1997)	<b>27/01/2000</b>
<b>Bhat, D. Nityananda.</b> Kerala, Director- SORI	<b>02/02/2000</b>
<b>Bhat, L. Shridhar.</b> Karnataka, Sanskrit teacher and Konkani activist	<b>03/09/1999</b>
<b>Bhembre, Uday.</b> Goa, Editor - Daily Sunaparant, Ex-MLA, President - GKA (1996-2002) and <i>AsmitaiPratishthan</i> Ex-President.-Parishad (1986-1988)	<b>24/10/1999</b>
<b>Borkar, Dilip.</b> * Goa, Activist, Writer,Publisher	<b>21/02/2001</b>
<b>Borkar, Madhav.</b> *Goa, Poet, Asst. Director of All India Radio,	<b>26/04/1999</b>
<b>Cardoso, Felicio.</b> Goa, Journalist, Writer, Tiatrist, Teacher Ex-President.-KBM (1984-86), Member (1993-97) and Convenor (1998-2002) of Advisory Board	<b>25/09/1998</b> <b>16/09/2000</b>
<b>Cardoso, Tomazinho.</b> Goa, Tiatrist, writer, politician Founder Member, Dalgado Academy (Ex-MLA & Speaker, Goa Legislative Assembly)	<b>29/12/1999</b> <b>21/02/2001</b>
<b>Claro, John.</b> Goa, Writer, Tiatrist, Activist	<b>20/08/2000</b>
<b>D'Souza, Msgr. Dr.</b> Karnataka, Ex-Editor- <i>Raknno</i> President-KKSA (2001- ) (Member, Sahitya Akademi General Council: 1998-2002)	<b>01/03/2000</b>
<b>D'Souza, Edwin J. F.</b> Karnataka, Writer, Ex-Secretary-KBMK Editor-Amar Konkani	<b>28/02/2000</b> <b>29/02/2000</b>
Founder Member- Konkani Lekhakancho Ekvott Ex-President.- Parishad (1989)	
<b>Daniel, Sam.</b> Karnataka, Principal, MGM College, Udupi.	<b>11/03/2000</b>

<b>Desai, Purushottam.</b> Karnataka, Teacher, Activist	<b>24/03/1999</b>
<b>Fernandes, Jess.</b> Goa, Writer, Tiatrlist, Activist Member – KBM	<b>19/8/2000</b>
<b>Fernandes, Martin Minin.</b> Goa, Teacher, Activist	<b>19/08/2000</b>
<b>Gowda, M. Gopal.</b> Karnataka, Folk Artist, Activist <i>Mangalore</i> Founder- <i>Kunnbi janapada Kala Vedike</i> Ex-Member-KKSA	<b>25/02/2000</b>
<b>Halarnakar, T.B.</b> Goa, Writer, Activist, Ex-President. – KBM (1986-88), President - Parishad (2001- ) Editor – Konkani Vishwakosh	<b>23/01/2000</b> <b>13/07/2000</b> <b>18/07/2000</b>
<b>Heblekar, A. K.</b> Goa, Educationist, Writer, Administrator	<b>15/11/1998</b>
<b>Jogalekar, R.V.</b> Goa, Educationist, Social Activist	<b>26/04/1999</b>
<b>Kamath, P. G.</b> Kerala, Writer, Editor, Researcher Ex-President- Kerala Konkani Academy ( Member, Advisory Board-Sahitya Akademi: 1998-2002)	<b>27/09/1999</b>
<b>Kamath, Shivaram.</b> Karnataka, Secretary-AKKSP, Member-KKSA (Member, Advisory Board-Sahitya Akademi: 1998-2002)	<b>23/10/1998</b>
<b>Karmali, Nagesh.*</b> Goa, Poet, President.-Sammelan (1996) Organiser, Activist, Member-Parishad Founder - Konkani Lekhak Sangh Member - GKARC and later of GKA (1993 – 2002)	<b>23/11/1999</b>
<b>Kelekar, Gurunath.</b> Goa, Journalist, writer, Publisher Ex-President.-Sammelan (1990)	<b>26/08/2002</b> <b>27/08/2002</b>
<b>Kelekar, Ravindra.*</b> Goa, Writer, Translator, Publisher, Editor, Ideologue, thinker, Ex-President.-Parishad (1978-1980) (Convenor, Advisory Board-Sahitya Akademi: 1978-1982, 1983-1987)	<b>12/05/1997</b>

<b>Lobo, Lawrence.</b> Karnataka, Secretary-KBMK for many years	29/02/2000
<b>Machado, Fr. Peter.</b> Karnataka, Parish Priest, Organiser,	09/05/1999
<b>Madtha, Fr. Prashant.</b> Karnataka, Principal, St. Aloysius College	28/02/2000
<b>Mallaya, N. Purushothama.</b> Kerala. Writer, Publisher Founder- KBPS, Campaigner Ex-President.- Parishad (1980-1982) President – Kerala Gauda Saraswat Mahasabha	22/09/1999 27/01/2000
<b>Moras, Paul.</b> Karnataka, Ex-President. -KBMK Convenor- Konkani Jatha	21/10/1999
<b>Naik, Bharat.</b> Goa Writer, Publisher, Activist Theatre artist, Convenor–GKARC Vice-President KBM (1998-2000)	22/01/2000 22/02/2000
<b>Naik, Fr. Pratap.</b> ,Goa Writer, Researcher Director – TSKK Founder Member – Dalgado Academy	02/06/2001
<b>Naik, Pundalik Narayan.*</b> Goa, Writer, Convenor-KPA Ex-Vice President-GKA President.- Parishad (1999-2001) President – GKA (2002- )	20/12/1999 30/12/1999 06/01/2000
<b>Noronha, Titus.</b> Karnataka, Activist, Member- <i>Ekvott</i> , Founder Member – CERF	28/02/2000
<b>Ozario, Eric.</b> Karnatak, Activist, poet, Singer, Musician Founder- <i>Mandd Sobhann</i> Ex- member-KKSA, Organiser – <i>Saant, Porob</i>	23/02/2000
<b>P.Manohar.</b> Kerala, Active Member & Ex- Secretary– KKA	24/09/1999



<b>Pai, Anil</b> , Karnataka, Theatre Artist, Playwright	<b>08/05/1999</b>
<b>Pai, Fr. C. C. A.</b> Karnataka, Writer, Researcher, Publisher (Swami Supriya)	<b>25/12/1998</b>
<b>Pai, K. K.</b> Karnataka, Banker, Founder - KBMK, Managing Trustee, T. M. A. Pai Foundation Ex-President.- <i>Parishad</i> (1974-76) President -World Konkani Convention	<b>04/03/2000</b>
<b>Pai, K. Mohan.</b> Karnataka,, Writer, Physician, Administrator Founder Secretary-KLMEIA	<b>25/02/2000</b>
<b>Pai Angle, Bhiku.Goa</b> Marathi writer, Activist, educationist, Theatre Personality	<b>06/05/2000</b>
<b>Palankar, Asha.</b> Karnataka, President, KKSK	<b>22/10/1998</b>
<b>Palekar, Yashwant.</b> Goa, Writer, Editor, Publisher Ex-President –KBM	<b>05/05/2000</b>
<b>Pandit, Madhav.</b> Goa, Teacher, Freedom-Fighter Marathi Activist, Social activist	<b>20/09/1999</b>
<b>Phene, R. N.</b> Goa, Educationist, Political Activist from Karwar	<b>20/01/2000</b> <b>21/01/2000</b>
<b>Prabhu, M. Mukund.</b> Karnataka, Writer, Researcher	<b>29/02/2000</b>
<b>Priolkar, Prafulla.</b> Goa, Freedom-Fighter, Congressman Ex-Secretary, GPCC	<b>19/12/1999</b> <b>05/01/2000</b> <b>14/01/2000</b>
<b>Raikar, R. G.</b> Karnataka, Retd. Teacher, Activist	<b>08/05/1999</b>
<b>Raju, R. S.</b> Kerala, Social activist	<b>30/01/2000</b>
<b>Ramakrishnan, O. S.</b> Kerala, President-Kudumbi Seva Sangham	<b>09/02/2000</b>
<b>Rao, K.N.</b> Karnataka., Writer, Poet, Lexicographer (assistant of late M.M. Shanbhag, the founder of the Konkani Parishad and witness to the First Parishad in Karwar in 1939)	<b>24/12/1998</b>

- Rao, R. K.** Kerala, 28/09/1999  
Translator, Publisher, Lexicographer  
(Ex-President-Parishad (1990-1992)  
Founder-Konkani Language Institute  
Founder President-Kerala Konkani Academy
- Rodrigues, Catherine.** Karnaka, 10/03/2000  
Konkani writer, Activist  
Member-Tulu Academy in Karnataka
- Sequeira, Fr. Samuel.** Karnataka, 01/03/2000  
Ex-Editor-*Raknno*  
Editor-*Janavahini*
- Shanbhag, Jayashree.** Karnataka, 24/9/1999  
Writer, Director-All India Radio
- Shanbhag, K. Anandu.** Karnataka, 09/05/1999  
Writer, theatre activist 01/02/2000  
Publisher, Ex-member, KKSA
- Shanbhag, Vasudeva.** Karnataka, 07/05/1999  
Writer, Music Director  
Activist, Organiser
- Shantharam, H.** Karnataka, 3/03/2000  
Administrative Officer., Academy of General Education.  
(Member, Advisory Board, Sahitya Akademi: 1998-2002)
- Shenoy, Basti Vaman.** Karnataka, 22/02/2000  
Ex-President.-KKSA (1994- 2001) Ex-President KBMK (1992-  
1996) Chief Convenor- World Konkani Convention (1995)  
Promoter- World Konkani Organisation (1995)
- Shenoy, D. Shivanand.** Kerala, Poet, Activist 05/02/2000
- Shenoy, H. B.** Kerala, 01/02/2000  
Ex-Secretary., Kerala Konkani Academy  
Active Founder Member, KBPS,
- Shenoy, U. S.** Karnataka, 09/03/2000  
Editor-Jai Konkani. Kundapura  
Organiser-Konkani Kala Samaj
- Shetty, Ganesha,** Kerala 30/01/2000  
Senior member, Konkani Vaishyas

<b>Shivdas, N.</b> , Goa. Writer, Vice-President.–GKA (1996-2002) Founder President- Konkani Lekhak Sangh	<b>09/01/2000</b>
<b>Sonde, V. S.</b> Karnataka, Organiser, Community leader Founder – UKZKSP	<b>09/05/1999</b>
<b>Subramaniam, K. K.</b> Kerala Poet, Organiser, Activist, Publisher Secretary-Konkani Sahitya Samaj	<b>30/01/2000</b>
<b>Subramaniam, L.</b> Kerala Kudumbi Activist, Secretary.- TRACKS	<b>07/02/2000</b>
<b>Sunitha bai, L.</b> Kerala Teacher, Researcher, Lexicographer	<b>28/09/1999</b>
<b>Tantri, Shripati.</b> Karnataka, Retired Teacher in Sociology Principal, Manipal Jr. College	<b>04/03/2000</b>
<b>Valdar, Fr. Mark.</b> Karnataka, Ex -President.-KBMK, Ex-Editor- <i>Raknno</i> Member, Advisory Board, Sahitya Akademi: 1983-1987	<b>8/02/2000</b>
<b>Veluskar, Ramesh.</b> *Goa, Poet, Ex-President KBM	<b>13/04/1999</b>
<b>Verekar, Shyam.,</b> Goa, Writer, Folk Researcher Ex-secretary-KBM (1984-86) President- KBM (2002- )	<b>20/11/1998</b>
<b>Vernekar, S. S.</b> Karnataka, Retd. teacher, Member-KKSA	<b>08/05/1999</b>
<b>Vishnudas, P. P.</b> , Kerala. Secretary, Vaishya Youth Asscn.	<b>06/02/2000</b>

\* indicates the recipient of the Sahitya Akademi literary award.

APPENDIX - II  
ABBREVIATIONS

- ABKP** - Akhil Bharatiya Konkani Parishad
- ABKSS** - Akhil Bhaatiya Konkani Sahitya Sammelan
- ACME** - Action Committee on Medium of Education
- AISCO**- All India Saraswat Cultural Organization
- AKKSP** – Akhil Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Parishad
- BJP** – Bharatiya Janata Party
- BORI** – Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
- BSK** – Bharatiya Saunskriti Kosh
- CASK** – Catholic Association of South Kanara
- CERF** – Canara Education and Research Foundation
- D. K.** – Dakshina Kannada
- Ekvott** – Konkani Lekhancho Ekvott
- GKA** – Goa Konkani Akademi
- GKARC** – Goa Konkani Akademi Reconstitution Committee
- GMBP** – Gomantak Marathi Bhasha Parishad
- GSB** – Gauda Saraswat Brahmins
- KBM** . - Konkani Bhasha Mandal
- KBMK** - Konkani Bhasha Mandal Karnataka
- KBPS** – Konkani Bhasha Prachar Sabha
- KKA** - Kerala Konkani Academy

**KKS** – Kerala Kudumbi Sangham

**KKSA** – Karnataka Konkani Sahitya Academy

**KKSK** – Konkani Kala Ani Sanskriti Kendra

**KLMEIA** – Konkani Linguistic Minority Educational Institutions Association

**KLS** - Konkani Lekhak Sangh

**KPA** - Konkani Porjecho Avaz

**MAHE** – Manipal Acedemy of Health and Education

**MES** – Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti

**MGP** – Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party

**MRBPS** – Marathi Rajya Bhasha Prasthapan Samiti

**N. K.** - NorthKanara

**OL** – Official Language

**OLC** – Official Language Commission

**S. K.** – South Kanara

**SORI** – Sukrtindra Oriental Research Institute

**TSKK** – Thomas Stephens Konknni Kendra

**UGDP** – United Goans Democratic Party

**UGP** – United Goans Party

**U. K.** – Uttara Kannada

**UKZKSP** – Uttara Kannada Zilla Konkani Sahitya Parishad

**VKS** – Vishwa Konkani Sammel/ Sammelan